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Sketch of the Life, Writings and Character of Moses Mendelssohn.

HAUD FACILE emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat
Res angusta domi. ————— Juven.

IN the catalogue of illustrious authors in Germany, during the eighteenth century, we find the name of a man who, under every disadvantage of birth and early situation, rose to intellectual, literary and moral eminence.

MOSES MENDELSSOHN* was born, in 1729, at Dessau, in the circle of Upper Saxony. His father, a Jewish school-master, had great difficulty in providing for the wants of the passing day; his office being little esteemed by the community of which he was a member, and very scantily remunerated. At home, the subject of this memoir was instructed only in Hebrew, and in the elements of the Mosaic religion: and although he was placed at one of the public schools of the Jews, he learnt scarcely any thing there which invigorated his faculties, or added to his stock of knowledge.

The works of Maimonides, how-

ever, fell into his hands while he was yet a boy. To the perusal of them he applied himself with a diligence which undermined his health. So fond was he of the employment, that he devoted to it whole nights: nor could he be easily torn from his favourite author, to whom he was mainly indebted for the love of truth, of free inquiry and of philosophical reflection, which characterized him through life,—and by his intimate acquaintance with whose writings his talents were developed and improved.

Those talents were at once considerable and varied. With more than usual strength of understanding Mendelssohn united a warm yet enlightened sensibility. His love of metaphysical investigation was mingled with occasional indulgence in polite literature. He wrote verses when he was only ten years old: but, though his translation of the Psalms, at a much later period, shews that he had some claim to the honours of a poet, his habits and his inclination marked him for a philosopher. He persevered in the study of Maimonides, and manifested a decided predilection for abstract speculations.

* The name signifies, the son of Mendel.

At the age of fourteen, he left his father's house. This step was taken with the consent of his parents, who could ill afford to keep him at home, and who shared his hope that he would be able to gratify in another scene his literary taste, and to surmount the obstacles of his poverty, his descent and his sickly frame. On his arrival at Berlin, he was without money, and apparently without a friend.

In this state of extreme indigence, he happened to gain the notice of a benevolent Jew, who gave him board and lodging, and did all that he could for his relief. Mendelssohn, too, had now the long wished for opportunity of making some progress in learning. Hearing that Frankel, who had formerly been a Rabbini, at Dessau, was stationed in Berlin, he conquered his natural bashfulness, and introduced himself to this person, who assisted him in studying the Talmud and Jewish theology, and engaged him to copy his manuscripts. This kind of labour, it must be confessed, did not suit exactly the young man's views: yet, being pursued with assiduity, it served to strengthen his powers and to prepare him for higher efforts.

Berlin was, at that period, the residence of many learned men, and even of some literary Jews, with whom Mendelssohn would gladly have associated, had not his indigence detained him in retirement. However, with one of these, who, like himself, was in very humble circumstances, he formed a valuable acquaintance. Israel Moses, a native of Stari Zamozze in Poland, had settled in Berlin, as the teacher of a school: but

owing to the undaunted freedom with which he had exposed some pretensions of the Jewish ecclesiastics, he became the victim of persecution, and was reduced to poverty. The friendship which Mendelssohn contracted with him, was founded in the similarity of their intellectual habits as well as in that of their situation. He was a man of uncommon talents and various acquirements. To a large portion of general knowledge he added particular skill and proficiency in mathematics. Under such an instructor the pupil made rapid and sure advances. Israel Moses translated Euclid into Hebrew, for the benefit of Mendelssohn: and the reasonings of Maimonides, of whom both were enamoured, furnished them with an almost inexhaustible subject of discussion.

Other aids were still wanting. Hebrew was the only language of which Israel Moses was master: and Mendelssohn was ardently desirous of learning Latin. It was happy that the young Jewish physician, who had principally inspired the wish, lent his aid in giving it effect. This assistance was continued for half a year. But great as were Mendelssohn's obligations to his friendly guide, he owed still more to his own application and perseverance. It was with no little difficulty that he could spare money for the purchase of a grammar and a second-hand dictionary. By means of these he qualified himself for reading and understanding the works of Locke in a Latin translation. The acquisition was more than a compensation for the toil.

His attention was next engaged by the modern languages, particu-

larly the French and English*, in the study of which, he availed himself of his intimacy with Doctor Gumperz, a young Jew, much distinguished by his literary habits, talents and attainments.

The circle of Mendelssohn's friends, was now larger: and his intercourse with persons of taste and learning, had an auspicious influence on his mind and manners. From no connexion, however, did he derive so much advantage as from that which began in 1754, with Lessing, in whom some of the richest treasures of intellect and knowledge were united with a superior disposition and ability to bring forward the mental powers of other men, and who was in the practice of examining with perfect freedom, subjects of the first consequence to human beings. Frederick Nicolai, a literary bookseller at Berlin, was the beloved associate of both. During more than twenty years these three friends were closely linked together by mutual affection and confidence: nor did their occasional discordancies in opinion produce the slightest jealousy or ill-will.

Nicolai was editor of a periodical work of high and deserved reputation: and in this he received occasional help from the pen of Mendelssohn, who, in 1755, came before the public with a volume of 'Letters, on a Taste for Beauty in the Arts,' &c. These were composed in the German language, which, at that time, was relatively in an uncultivated state. But Mendelssohn considerably im-

proved it: his style was easy, perspicuous and elegant; and the world soon saw that an obscure and indigent Jew was destined to rank among the finest writers of his age and country.

His intense pursuit of his studies, in which, with an imprudence too common among literary men, he frequently passed the night, increased the weakness of his constitution. Once he was prevented for a whole year from attending to any employments which required abstraction of thought. From this threatening indisposition he recovered: and the writings which he afterwards published, are sufficient proofs that his intellectual vigour was unimpaired.

Mendelssohn's most important publication is 'Phædon, a Dialogue on the Immortality of the Soul.' But while it bears this title, in common with Plato's on the same subject, its reasonings are not those of heathen philosophy. It is divided into three parts: and prefixed to it is a life of Socrates, chiefly taken from the English of John Gilbert Cowper.

He was also the author of some performances, the object of which is the development of what may be termed *the philosophy of taste*. Of these the principal has been already mentioned. Among his metaphysical writings, his 'Essay on the Immateriality of the Soul,' his 'Dissertation on Evidence,' which gained the prize of the Berlin Academy, and his '*Morgenstunden*, [Morning-hours] or Lectures on the Being of a God,' the substance of which he had kindly delivered to some young relations and friends, who, towards the conclusion of his life, spent their mornings with him, must, of course, be ranked.

* To a work of Manasseh Ben Israel, "concerning the Jews, &c.," translated from the English, Mendelssohn afterwards published a very admirable preface.

In his treatise entitled *Jerusalem*, he very ably discusses the subjects of religious liberty and the Mosaic dispensation. His purpose in writing it, was to place toleration on its proper basis, and to remove the popular prejudices against his Jewish brethren.

At the request of Hirschel Levi, chief rabbin at Berlin, he drew up his 'Ritual of the Jews.' In this undertaking also he had the benefit of the members of his own communion principally in view. The work is a compendium of those of their laws which relate to property, and the knowledge of which is essential in suits between individuals of this people. Such knowledge had hitherto been withheld from many of them, in consequence of the regulations in question being veiled in rabbinical Hebrew: but Mendelssohn now presented it to the German Jews, in the language of the country, and in a clear and attractive style.

He wrote, moreover, a Commentary, in Hebrew, on the Book of Ecclesiastes, and published separately, etymological notes on this part of the Bible, for the use of students.

With the benevolent intention of aiding the Jewish youth of Germany, in the study of the vernacular language, he printed his version of the five books of Moses, a specimen of which he had before given to the world.

Of his translation of the Psalms some account will, doubtless, be acceptable to the readers of the *Monthly Repository*.

It is dedicated to Ramler, a celebrated Lyric Poet of Germany, and an intimate associate of Mendelssohn's. In an interesting preface the translator makes his

readers acquainted with the steps by which he advanced in executing a version of *all* the Psalms, and with the motives which prompted him to the undertaking. He has divided his translation into five books, and intimates his design of reserving some critical observations for a future volume, which however has not appeared. The version is eminently simple, pure and elegant, and often presents readings which are singularly happy. In this country it does not seem to be so much known as it deserves; although it strongly claims the notice of those students who have the means of availing themselves of the choicest treasures of German literature and theology.

The controversies in which Mendelssohn was a party, were highly injurious to his health and spirits.

Lavater, famous throughout Europe for his labours, if we must not call them his reveries, in *Physiognomy*, had translated from the French a work of Bonnet's, in proof of the truth of Christianity,—and, with the best intentions, dedicated his volume to Mendelssohn. The language of the dedication gave it the air of a challenge rather than the appearance of an act of courtesy. Mendelssohn was called upon by the zealous translator either to refute the arguments of Bonnet, or to embrace and avow the Christian faith. With the indelicacy of this proceeding he was justly hurt, and he published, in consequence, a letter to Lavater, in which he states his reasons for declining the discussion. He is perhaps to be commended for not obeying *such a summons* into the

field of theological dispute. Yet, for the sake of the public, and for the benefit of truth, it were to be wished, that a man of Mendelssohn's powers had laid before the world the progress and the issue of his reflections on the claims of the Christian doctrine. From the tenor and language of his letter, he seems to have imagined, that by receiving the gospel he would renounce his belief of the divine origin of Judaism. But this opinion is a palpable error; although it be not uncommon among his Jewish brethren.

His death was hastened by his zeal in vindicating the memory of Lessing.

Spinoza, himself a Jew, was the author of some philosophical speculations, the tendency of which is generally considered to be destructive of the first principles of natural religion: and Jacobi, a German writer of notoriety, informed Mendelssohn, in a private letter, that those principles had been fully adopted by his deceased companion. Lessing, he said, had declared as much to him, not long before his dissolution. Nor can it well be doubted that Jacobi put this sense on certain expressions of the dying philosopher. Mendelssohn on the other hand, was persuaded that his correspondent must have misapprehended Lessing's sentiments. In vain, however, did he attempt to undeceive Jacobi: in vain did he appeal to the unreserved confidence which subsisted between Lessing and himself, to his perfect knowledge of his friend's opinions, and to the testimony of their common associates. No explanation could satisfy the party bringing the accusation, who even ventured on

publishing this correspondence. A voluminous controversy followed, in which many others took a share. Mendelssohn was thought to have refuted his antagonist and to have avenged Lessing: but his life was in fact sacrificed to his exertions.

On the merits of the dispute it may not be very material to pass a judgment. Lessing, unquestionably, was in the practice of allowing the freest scope to his inquiries: and Jacobi unfortunately supposed that philosophical investigations are of necessity hostile to religion. Nevertheless, it is difficult to believe, that Mendelssohn was ignorant of the sentiments of his most intimate friend on a point of so much importance: and we cannot but admire the warmth of attachment by which he was animated to the defence of Lessing, and the vigorous talents of which he gave proof in the controversy, notwithstanding the increased weakness of his bodily constitution.

He died of an apoplexy, the effect of that weakness, January 4th. 1786, and was interred with every mark of honour which his brethren could shew.

Mendelssohn is described as having been particularly amiable in his family, to whom he bequeathed property sufficient for preserving them from want. He had carried on, for many years, a retail trade, and had superintended a silk-manufactory: yet he proved himself capable of combining the habits of a scholar with those of a man of business. His friends were accustomed to speak of him as eminently possessing the most valuable qualities of the understanding and the heart. Such were the wisdom and energy of his conver-

sation that it was not uncommon to style him *the Socrates of Germany*: and, without doubt, he is a memorable example of the force of talent and perseverance in removing some of the greatest obstacles to the improvement of of the mind.

His friendships were not confined to his literary associates, nor his good offices, to the community of the Jews. There were some among the clergy who sought his advice, who admired his abilities and character, and who behaved to him with a confidence, affection and hospitality, no less gratifying to his own feelings than honourable to their's.

The life of Mendelssohn exhibits a pattern which young persons of a taste and ardour like his, and in similar circumstances, will do well to copy. They may hence learn never to distrust the governing Providence of God, never to remit the efforts of which they are capable, never to despise the dictates of an honourable prudence. It is principally with the view of inculcating such lessons as these that the present memoir of this extraordinary man has been prepared. Another end may perhaps be answered by the perusal of it—the reader may now have a stronger conviction that moral and intellectual excellence are not confined to particular denominations or sects of men.—In the age and nation in which he lived Mendelssohn was not the only literary Jew. Let the benefits of unrestricted toleration and liberal intercourse be extended to people of all persuasions in religion, and the minds and the character of all will be improved in the highest degree which humanity permits.

We have in this country opulent Jews, some of whom are occasionally spoken of as patronizing, and some few as cultivating knowledge and the arts. But it is rarely, indeed, that any of these or of their humbler brethren in England have appeared with reputation as writers on subjects of general learning and science. There is not one of them who makes approaches to MENDELSSOHN. In these circumstances, it is natural to inquire, What cause can be assigned of this difference between the Jewish inhabitants of Great Britain and those of Germany? The practical solution of the problem, can be given by the legislature of the United Kingdom.

N.

[The preceding Sketch, &c. has been drawn up in part from the *Monthly Magazine*, (Vol. vi. 38—44.) but chiefly from a small work published at Hamburg in 1797, and entitled *Leben und Meinungen Moses Mendelssohn, nebst dem Geiste seiner Schriften in einem kurzen Abrisse dargestellt*. This latter piece of Biography, is an agreeable, intelligent performance, written apparently by a partial and intimate friend of Mendelssohn's: its most glaring defect is the neglect of method and arrangement.]

Historical Account of the Warrington Academy.

(Continued from p. 172.)

On Dr. Aikin's acceptance of the appointment unanimously proposed to him, of successor to Dr. Taylor, in the theological chair, Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Joseph Priestley (then minister at Namptwich, in Cheshire) was with equal unanimity invited to become the tutor in languages and polite literature. Of this distinguished person (*pater et proprio amico*) so many accounts have been published, and so explicit, candid and instructive

a narrative has been given by himself of all the particulars of his life, in the excellent Memoirs of himself to the period of his leaving England, and by his son, in continuation, to the time of his death, (which, having been reprinted in so cheap a form by the several Unitarian Societies, are probably in the hands of most of your readers) that I shall confine myself in this historical essay, to the period of his connection with the Warrington Academy.

It appears, from the work above referred to, that although almost every branch of literature had, at one time or another, engaged his attention, he would have preferred the mathematical and philosophical chair, if it had happened to be vacant. But though he distinctly states* that he had no par-

* Page 42. The gross perversion of this passage by Messrs. Bogue and Bennett has been well exposed by your able Reviewer, in p. 637, of your last volume. A worse perversion which they and several others, have dared to make of his death bed conversation with his family is also judiciously animadverted upon: but the author has been often mortified to see how his enemies and the enemies of truth have triumphed, and how Scrutator and others have laboured after explanations, and made admissions, to which they would never have been driven, if an over-nicety had not prevented the proper application from being given. It is known to too many persons, to expect that any silence can bury it in oblivion, and if this were possible, it would not be desirable, at the expence of the permanent settlement of even the shadow of a cloud upon the bright scene of his departure to a better world, that the misconduct of a near relation was the cause of greater distress and sorrow to Dr. Priestley, than any, or than all, the other events of his life: and it was no doubt, to this unhappy circumstance, and not to any thing connected with his own personal conduct or its consequences, and, least of all, to any circumstance or imagined conse-

quency connected with the calm and placid hour of dissolution, that he alludes, when he assures his son, that the view of future punishment, in Mr. Simpson's pamphlet, "would be a support to him in the most trying circumstances, as it had been to himself." If this could possibly have admitted of a doubt, it would have been completely set aside, if one single sentence more had been printed of the beautiful letter addressed to Mr. Lindsey, April 15, 1803 (*Life of Lindsey*, App. p. 537). As the writer happens to possess a copy of that letter, he ventures (*suo periculo*) to subjoin it. After expressing his belief "that even the wicked will, after a state of wholesome discipline, be raised in due time, to a state of happiness," he adds, "This is a very sensible relief to my mind, with respect to a person, whose relation to myself I cannot forget, and for whom I cannot forbear to feel most sensibly."

* Although in the niceties of verbal criticism, for which, certainly, his other multifarious pursuits allowed little time, he was, no doubt, excelled by many others, his general familiarity with the Greek and Roman classics, as well as with the fathers of the Christian church, is manifest, not only in his *Histories of Corruptions and Early Opinions*, and in the controversies occasioned by them, but also in the wonderful variety and aptness of the mottos prefixed to his almost numberless publications, and in

Theory of Language, and on Oratory and Criticism, fully justified the expectations of the trustees concerning him. The former were printed for the use of the students, and were afterwards sanctioned by their adoption by Dr. Kippis, as his text-book at Hoxton, and were announced for publication with some supplementary ones of Dr. Kippis's, as a joint monument of their long friendship; but never appeared. They contain much ingenious and curious, and some very profound, research: in one place their author appears to have anticipated the discoveries of Mr. H. Tooke*.—The latter were published, during his residence with Lord Shelburne, with a handsome but truly independent, dedication, full of excellent advice, to Lord Fitzmaurice. Besides these lectures, having exchanged the teaching of logic and Hebrew, with Dr. Aikin, to whose department they seemed more naturally to belong, he composed courses of lectures on history and general policy, on the particular history of England, and on the laws and constitution of England;† and, in order to recommend the study of these subjects in a course of academical education, to the more general at-

the quickness and vivacity with which he applies quotations from the classics on every proper occasion. This trait in his literary character, which I have not seen noticed, would bear to be illustrated at considerable length.

* "Cooper's Analysis of Dr. Priestley's Works." p. 387.

† In drawing up this last course it is probable that he received considerable assistance from his excellent colleague above mentioned, whose knowledge of the subject may naturally be supposed to have been much more extensive and accurate than his own.

tention of the public, he drew up and published an "Essay on a Course of Liberal Education, for Civil and Active Life," to which he subjoined the Syllabus of these three new sets of Lectures. And as Dr. Brown, of Newcastle, had just then published a "Code of Education," which he recommended to be authoritatively established by the legislature, he added some remarks upon that treatise, in which he unanswerably demonstrated how inimical all compulsory plans of education are to liberty and the rights of parents. These, together with some remarks on church authority, in answer to Dr. Balguy, he afterwards incorporated in his incomparable Essay on Government, which deserves to be read and studied by every Englishman. The Lectures on History were afterwards published at large about the year 1790. And in order to facilitate the study of chronology, so justly termed one of the eyes of history, he drew up his Chart of Biography, on an idea as original as it is simple and perspicuous; and afterwards constructed a Chart of History, on a scale correspondent to it: the idea of which, however, was taken from a French historical chart, but considerably improved in many respects; particularly by causing the stream of time to flow uniformly through its whole extent, instead of having four different scales in different ages of the world, as in the French chart.

Dr. Priestley's mode of lecturing is described by himself, in the Essay above referred to, and also in the Preface to his Lectures on History. It was "to have his lecture drawn up in the form of a pretty full text-book, which he

read and then illustrated by "a familiar address, questioning his pupils very particularly on the subject of the former lecture, before he proceeded to a new one; and on some of the subjects he had much more to say to the students, and to enquire of them, than on others. Also in going over the lectures a second time, he paid little regard to the divisions he had first made, but took in more or less matter, as he found convenient at the time." It is thus described by the excellent friend to whose communication the *Essay on the Life of Dr. Aikin*, has been so much indebted, who was his pupil, during the greatest part of his residence at Warrington.

"What Dr. Priestley added in discoursing from his written lectures (most of which are since published to the world,) was pointedly and clearly illustrative of the subject before him, and expressed with great simplicity and distinctness of language, though he sometimes manifested that difficulty of utterance which he mentions in the *Memoirs of his Life*. At the conclusion of his lecture, he always encouraged the students to express their sentiments relative to the subjects of it, and to urge any objections to what he had delivered without reserve. It pleased him when any one commenced such a conversation. In order to excite the freest discussion, he occasionally invited the students to drink tea with him, in order to canvass the subjects of his lectures. I do not recollect that he ever shewed the least displeasure at the strongest objections that were made to what he delivered; but I distinctly remember the smile of approbation with which he usual-

ly received them; nor did he fail to point out in a very encouraging manner, the ingenuity or force of any remarks that were made, when they merited these characters. His object, as well as Dr. Aikin's, was, to engage the students to examine and decide for themselves, uninfluenced by the sentiments of any other person. His written lectures he used to permit each student to take and read in his own lodgings. Those on rhetoric he gave them the liberty of copying, those on history of reading only, as he intended them for publication. From minutes in short-hand, he dictated to each student, by turns, one of the Lectures on History, who copied after him in long-hand. From this copy the Dr. told me they were printed, with some additions only relative to subsequent events.

"Without the least tincture of superstition or enthusiasm, both Dr. Aikin and Dr. Priestley endeavoured to instil into the minds of the students an habitual regard to good morals, and a veneration for the Supreme Being, and for the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, the great purpose and design of which, to instruct and improve mankind in piety and virtue, they judged to be best promoted by the most thorough, liberal and unbiassed inquiry into the evidence of their divine authority, and the true meaning of their contents.

"To have enjoyed the privilege, while young, of having such able, liberal and communicative instructors, I have always considered among the chief blessings of my life."

Such are the recollections of a

pupil worthy of their instructions, concerning the venerable guides of his youth.

Though no proficient in oratory himself, Dr. Priestley contrived to render himself very useful in the promotion of it among the students. He obtained the introduction of public weekly exercises, for the delivery of Latin and English compositions, and the recitation of passages, both in poetry and prose, calculated to improve the students in elocution, as well as to correct and refine their taste. His observations on their defects in speaking, and his directions how to remedy them, were very judicious; and he had the advantage of being able to refer them to excellent practical models in Dr. Aikin and Mr. Seddon. In assisting them to form a correct and elegant style, he was eminently qualified, not only by his thorough knowledge of the structure of the English language, displayed in his *Lectures on Language, Oratory and Criticism*, and in the *Notes and Observations* annexed to his *Grammar*, but also by his own example. For though in after-life, the multitude and variety of his writings, and the necessity which their rapid composition imposed upon him to attend to the matter rather than to the manner, occasioned them to be remarkable for sound sense, expressed in plain and perspicuous, but always vigorous, language, rather than for the correctness of the style and the polished elegance of the periods,* yet several of his earlier compositions, particularly

the *Sermon on the Duty of not Living to Ourselves*, the *Description of his Chart of Biography*, and the *Preface to his History of Electricity*, are very finely written. His actual success, in contributing to the formation of very excellent writers, both in prose and verse, might be specified in several distinguished instances, within, and also without, the strict precincts of the academy.

Engaged, as he was, in lecturing, as he himself states, five hours each day, to his several classes, and much longer, probably, as he must have been, for several years, at least, in preparing for their delivery, and for the subsequent examination of the students, it is surprizing that he found the leisure to devote a considerable portion of time to the study of natural science, particularly that he should have been able in so short a time, to read for and compose so large a work as the *History of Electricity*. But his ardour in these pursuits had always been great, and this department of philosophy was recommended by its novelty and popularity, as well as by its intrinsically curious and striking nature: the encouragement, besides, of several eminent persons with whom it had brought him acquainted, operated a strong incitement to his speedy completion of a work, which contributed at once to his own fame and to the promotion of science.

Soon after his settlement at Warrington, he married a lady, whom he justly describes as "possessed of an excellent understanding, much improved by reading, of great fortitude and strength of mind, and of a temper in the highest degree affectionate and

* "My object" says he of himself, p. 46, "was not to acquire the character of a fine writer, but of a useful one."

generous." This happy connection added greatly to his usefulness as well as his comfort; for it enabled him to take a number of the young men into his house as boarders, to their own great advantage, and it secured to him, both in their parents and in themselves, many valuable friendships, which were of great importance to him in the subsequent periods of his life. Mrs. Priestley's engaging manners and highly improving society attracted the warm attachment of many friends, particularly of Mrs. Barbauld, then Miss Aikin, whose deep regrets on her leaving Warrington, were expressed in one of the first and finest productions of her muse. Many other pieces from the same elegant pen, some of them published, but many also which have not been so, were produced by incidents connected with these excellent friends of her youth.

The society at Warrington was at this period singularly agreeable. The tutors lived in perfect harmony with each other, and with Mr. Seddon, the minister of the place, and the original projector of the academy; who, therefore, considered the institution as his child, and, as *Rector Academiæ*, kept up a constant intercourse both with the tutors and students, with the elder of whom he was very familiar, and was greatly beloved by them. The trustees, also, were perfectly satisfied with the general conduct of the institution, and, in the year 1762, were encouraged to build, in a more eligible situation, a common hall and library on a very

handsome scale, together with two good houses for Dr. Priestley and Mr. Holt, Dr. Aikin being accommodated with a third house in the neighbourhood.

But notwithstanding these promising appearances, the prospects of the tutors were in several respects by no means promising. The subscriptions of distant contributors gradually fell off, and endangered a defalcation of the annual salaries: and, the terms which had been fixed for the board of students being unreasonably low (fifteen pounds a year) there was little room for a young tutor, with a lately-married delicate wife, and growing family, to flatter himself that he should be able to make provision for them. Perhaps his apprehensions of a failure of the academy were more readily indulged than they would otherwise have been, on the account of Mrs. Priestley's ill health, and the wish to make trial of a change of air, but, it is certain, that it was, in other respects, with great regret that he determined to separate from colleagues with whom he had lived so cordially, and to quit a situation which was in every respect agreeable to him, and which had now in a manner ceased to be laborious. To the great disappointment, however, and mortification of the trustees, he accepted an invitation to become the minister of the congregation at Mill-Hill chapel, in Leeds, whither he removed in 1767.—The rest of his active and eventful life forms no part of the history of this institution.

V. F.

[To be continued.]

EXTRACTS FROM NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Richards's History of the Royal Touch.

[Concluded from page 99.]

His brother and successor, *James II.* another of our *religious* monarchs, continued this practice with unabated zeal, solemnity and devotion. He appears to have made some improvement in the process; particularly by restoring the sign of the cross, which had been unaccountably omitted by his father and grandfather. It is probable that none of its ancient appendages were by him forgotten, or left unrestored, if he did not also, in his princely wisdom, devise some others equally suitable and edifying: and had the crown continued in his family, the good subjects of these realms would hardly have failed of having the institution or practice still preserved amongst them, and observed in all things according to the pattern exhibited by him. But his unexpected abdication forced things into another channel, and deprived us of so fair and important a chance. *James* is supposed to have practised at *Whitehall* as frequently, in proportion to the length of his reign, as his brother had done. But as his reign, compared with that of *Charles*, was very short, (though in some respects, much too long) it is not to be supposed that he, like the other, could boast of his myriads of patients and cures. It appears, however, that he was very assiduous in this business, as well when his occasions called him abroad, as when detained

within the precincts of his own court or palace: hence when he went to *Oxford* in 1687, about the affair of *Magdalen College* and other matters, part of his time there is known to have been employed in *touching*: which shews how very partial he was to the practice, and how very ready he was to attend to it on every occasion that might offer.* *Dr. Sykes* in a letter to *Dr. Charlett*, of September 4, 1687, expresses himself thus, "This morning the king touches in *Christ Church Quire*; hears one *Father Hall* this morning at the new *Popish Chapel* there; but whether he will be there in the afternoon, or at *University College*, I know not." And *Creech* in a letter to *Dr. Charlett*, of September 6, the same year, says, "On Sunday morning the king touched, *Warner* and *White* officiating: all that waited on his majesty kneeled at the prayers, beside the *Duke of Beaufort*, who stood all the time."† All this shews how partial and devoted *James* was to this practice, as well as how obsequiously the learned *Oxonians* observed and contemplated this part of their sovereign's conduct. Had he not gone beyond this royal touch, neither the *Magdalenians* nor any other *Oxonian* fraternity had ever resisted his mandates: his popularity, in that case, might have been as unbounded as that of our pre-

* See the *Athenæum* for April and May, 1809.

† *Athenæum* as before.

sent sovereign, and his descendants might have reigned here gloriously to this day.

At the Revolution this practice or operation was again suspended. *William III.* was a Presbyterian, and *Oliver Cromwell*, an Independent: the spirit and principles of these sects seem not to be congenial with, or favourable to the practice; nor does this gift or privilege appear to extend to sectarian or heterodox princes, but only to those of the Romish, or Church of England faith.

At the accession of *Anne*, of course, this sanative virtue and practice again revived, and numbers were touched by the royal hand of that illustrious princess, among whom was the late celebrated *Dr. Samuel Johnson*, then in his childhood. At the death of *Anne*, the said virtue forsook the British throne: at least, none of our succeeding monarchs have yet ventured to revive the practice. The two first princes of the present dynasty had, doubtless, their reasons for refraining from it; but as it is not known what they were, it is impossible to say whether their majesties were governed therein by wise or unwise, proper or improper, motives. We know that actions very right in themselves may yet be performed upon very wrong and unjustifiable principles. There is, however, no room to suppose that these two potentates, were in any measure influenced, in this instance, by what their enemies, the Jacobites, would be ready to insinuate;—an apprehension of their own title to the crown being defective. The voice of the nation (than which there can be no better title) had

placed them on the throne of these realms.

His present majesty has hitherto followed the example of his two immediate predecessors, in not restoring or resuming this dormant or neglected branch of the royal prerogative. If he ever should hereafter, at any time, think proper to restore or resume it, there can be no manner of doubt of his meeting with ample success, as well as abundant employment. In that case it may be presumed that multitudes of patients would soon be flocking in from all quarters, not excepting the county of Norfolk and the parts about Lynn Regis. His resolving to resume the practice would instantly occasion the revival of the national faith in the efficacy of the operation; and so far would such a resumption or experiment be from endangering his majesty's fair fame and popularity, that it would, in all probability, augment the same, and so render him for the residue of his reign, within the British isles at least, more popular and more celebrated than ever. But as we are not warranted to expect that his majesty will ever try the experiment, or put to the test the faith of his subjects in the miraculous efficacy of his touch, we shall here drop the subject as far as it may concern him.

It appears that after the death of *Queen Anne*, it was firmly believed by a great part of the nation, that the sanative virtue or miraculous power which she was allowed to possess, still existed in the person of a certain exiled prince of her family. In proof of which a story was industriously propagated of one *Christopher Lovel*, of Bris-

tol, who being most sadly and grievously afflicted with the evil, after having recourse to the most eminent of the faculty, and availed himself of the best medical help in vain, went at last to the continent, in quest of the said prince. Having found his royal highness, and been kindly received, he underwent the operation of the *touch*, got perfectly cured, and returned home safe and sound, in full health and high spirits, after an absence of four months and some few days. Carte, the historian, and many more, gentlemen of the faculty as well as others, visited him, examined the case thoroughly, and pronounced the cure complete. Some of them, of whom one was Dr. Lane, an eminent physician, considered it as one of the most extraordinary and wonderful events that had ever happened. After this, who can doubt the reality of the fact, that such a sanative virtue, gift or power, was actually possessed by the said prince?—It seems, however, that the miracle did not effect a radical cure: poor Lovel relapsed again sometime after, and died of the evil at last. Such, in all probability, were all the other great cures performed by the rest of our royal doctors, although many of them, like this, were attested as *perfect cures*, by very respectable but too credulous witnesses.

It is somewhat remarkable that *Whiston*, as well as *Carte*, believed in the efficacy of the royal touch: the former derives it from the *prayer* used at the time, while the latter seems to consider it as a divine or miraculous gift bestowed upon, or inherent to all the rightful heirs to the English throne. Both of them were men of consi-

derable respectability, and very confident, it seems, of the soundness of their respective opinions in this case. Their opinions, however, appear equally untenable, and may, pretty safely, be pronounced utterly unfounded. The favourable effects, or apparent benefit which some of those patients might experience after having undergone the operation of the *touch*, must doubtless be ascribed to their own operative faith and strength of imagination, rather than to any supernatural virtue proceeding from that princely performance, or any miraculous gift possessed by the royal practitioners. To the same cause must also be attributed the salutary effects said to have sometimes resulted from the pretended animal magnetism, as well as such empirical charms and nostrums as have acquired an uncommon share of popular fame, or have stood very high in the good opinion of the public. A patient's favourable opinion of a remedy administered to him, and his very confident expectation of deriving from it very essential benefit, are allowed to have had a happy effect, and to have done great things sometimes in very serious and dangerous cases.

Now we may rest assured that on no other ground but this can we reasonably account for benefits experienced by many who underwent the royal touch; admitting that to have been really the case; for it is too absurd to suppose that those royal personages were actually endowed with power to work miracles, or that the ceremony performed, or yet the gold given to the patients to wear about their necks, had in them any su-

pernatural or healing virtue, to render them capable of producing such effects.

It must be rather mortifying to our national vanity and pride, to think that our dear ancestors, for seven hundred years, firmly believed in the miraculous efficacy of the royal touch in scrofulous complaints.* But while we re-

* Would not the case have been the same with their descendants of the present generation, had our three last monarchs thought proper to continue the practice, or the present sovereign chose to revive it?—How strikingly was the easy faith of the nation exemplified in the implicit credit it gave to a late premier's possessing extraordinary and plenary ability to heal all the national or political maladies of Britain, of Europe, and of the world? And had he pretended to a power to cure the scrofula, or any other bodily complaint, with his *touch*, would it not have been readily believed by all his numerous admirers, and by the greatest part of our countrymen? And would not numerous witnesses have soon appeared, ready to attest the reality and completeness of his cures?—Circumstances seem evidently to favour these conclusions: nor will the story of the *Dumb Doctor*, still fresh in every body's memory, (not to mention other cases) allow of our making here an exception in favour of the inhabitants of Lynn.

For the sake of those readers who live at a distance from Lynn, the affair here last alluded to may require some explanation. Be it known, therefore, that the empirical adventurer, called the *Dumb Doctor*, made his appearance at Lynn about four and twenty years ago; and for a good while after, spent most of his time between this town and Wisbeach. It was given out that he had been deaf and dumb from his birth, and that he was a native of New England, or some part of North America, where he had, somehow, (miraculously, or at least in some very extraordinary and wonderful manner no doubt) acquired very deep knowledge and skill in the healing art; and after having performed great and astonishing cures in his own country, had actually crossed the wide At-

lantic out of pure kindness and compassion to the sick and infirm folk of this kingdom, most of whose complaints he might be expected capable of removing.—The tale very generally took with our good townsmen, and numbers of ailing people, gentle and simple, well-bred and ill-bred, from all quarters, flocked to the impostor for relief. Not a few of them also declared that they had actually derived great benefit from his prescriptions.—Thus he went on very prosperously, till an old acquaintance of his unluckily came to town, blew him up, and blasted all his hopes. He then suddenly decamped, and was never since seen or heard of in these parts.—It seems he had belonged to a company of strolling players, from which honourable fraternity he had been, on some occasion, expelled: upon which he took up the medical profession, pretending to be deaf and dumb, and a native of North America, as was before stated.—This may serve to shew that with all our scepticism and infidelity, and our large stock of fancied light and discernment, learning and refinement, we are by no means so far removed from the easy faith and blind credulity of our ancestors, or become such complete proofs against the wiles of imposture, or the specious arts of daring deceivers, as might be supposed, from our confident, loud and boisterous boastings.

this long section; hoping that its contents will not fail to contribute, at least in some measure, to the amusement and satisfaction of the inquisitive and candid reader; especially if he ever wished to learn the history of the royal touch, of which he will find here, perhaps, a more particular and circumstantial account than in any other publication.

P. S. Since the section on the royal touch has been printed off, a paper has appeared in the *Monthly Magazine*, under the signature of *J. Bannantine*, which casts some further light upon that subject. As it is presumed it will not be unacceptable to the reader, we take the liberty of inserting here the substance of it—"It does not appear (says that writer) that any of the House of Brunswick have asserted this royal function; at least, it has not been publicly announced, as was formerly the practice: but were his present majesty to resume it, such faith is yet put in the assertion of a king, that all the courtiers and the great body of the ignorant multitude would not hesitate to believe its infallibility. The last sovereign who appears to have exercised this miraculous gift was Queen *Anne*. In the Royal Gazette of March 12, 1712, appears the following public notice: 'It being her majesty's royal intention to touch publicly for the evil, the 17th of this instant March, and so to continue for sometime, it is her majesty's command, that tickets be delivered the day before at Whitehall, and that all persons bring a certificate signed by the minister and churchwardens of their respective parishes, that they never received the royal touch.'—He further adds, that

Wiseman, sergeant surgeon to Chas. 2nd, in a Treatise on the Evil, speaks of the royal touch in the following terms: 'I have myself been frequent eye-witness of many hundreds of cures performed by his majesty's touch alone; without the assistance of chirurgery, and those many of them such as had tired out the endeavours of able chirurgeons before they came thither. It were endless to relate what I myself have seen, and what I have received acknowledgement of by letters, not only from the several parts of the nation, but also from Ireland, Scotland, Jersey and Germany.'—It was the office of *Wiseman*, as sergeant surgeon, to select such afflicted objects as were proper to be presented for the royal touch.—Is it possible (*J. Bannantine* here exclaims) to desire a more satisfactory testimony of these miraculous cures, than that of a man of science and respectability, under whose immediate inspection they were performed; and who had 'himself been a frequent eye-witness of many hundreds of cures performed by his majesty's touch alone!'—The late judge *Barrington* (he further observes) relates what he heard from an old man, a witness in a cause, with regard to this miraculous power of healing.—'He had by his evidence fixed the time of a fact, by Queen *Anne*'s having been at Oxford, and touched him, whilst a child, for the evil. When he had finished his evidence, I had an opportunity of asking him whether he really was cured? Upon which he observed, with a significant smile, that he believed himself never to have had a complaint that deserved to be considered as the evil; but

that his parents were poor, and *Anne* granted her royal touch.—In *had no objection to the bit of gold.*" It seems to me (adds the judge) this piece of gold, that was given to those who were touched, accounts for the great resort on this occasion, and the supposed afterwards miraculous cures.—*Gimelli*, the famous traveller, gives an account of 1600 persons offering themselves to be cured of the evil by *Lewis XIV.* on Easter Sunday, 1686. *Gimelli* himself was present at the ceremony: every Frenchman received 15 sous, and every foreigner 30. This power of healing assumed by the kings of France, occasioned great resort to *Francis I.* while prisoner at *Madrid*, by the Spaniards, who had not such faith in their own king's touch. It appears by a proclamation of *James I.* March 25, 1617, that the kings of England would not permit any resort to them for these miraculous cures in the summer-time. By another proclamation of June 18, 1626, it is ordered that no one shall apply for this purpose, who does not bring a proper certificate, that he has never been touched before: the same, it has been already seen, were the terms on which *Queen*

Anne granted her royal touch.—In a prayer-book printed in 1703, is a form of the church-service, for the occasion of the royal touch. After the Lord's Prayer it is stated, "Then shall the infirm persons, one by one, be presented to the queen; while the queen is laying her hands upon them and is putting the gold about their necks, the chaplain that officiates, turning himself to her majesty, shall say these words following: "God give a blessing to this work, and grant that these sick persons on whom the queen lays her hands may recover through Jesus Christ our Lord!"—After some other prayers, the chaplain, standing with his face towards those come to be healed, shall say: "The Almighty God, who is a most strong tower to all them that put their trust in him, to whom all things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, do bow and obey, be evermore your defence; and make you know and feel that there is no other name under heaven given to man, and through whom you may receive health and salvation, but only in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen!"

Mon. Mag. March, 1810.

AN ADDRESS TO THE PROTESTANTS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND. BY CHARLES BUTLER, ESQ. OF LINCOLN'S INN.

[Concluded from p. 161.]

The Oath and Declaration prescribed by the British Parliament of the 31st of his present Majesty, and which is taken by all English Catholics.

"I A. B. do hereby declare, that I do profess the Roman Catholic religion.

VOL. VIII.

2 I

"I A. B. do sincerely promise and swear, that I will be faithful, and bear true Allegiance to his majesty, King George the Third, and him will defend to the utmost of my power against all conspiracies and attempts whatsoever that shall be made against his person,

crown or dignity: and I will do my utmost endeavour to disclose and make known to his majesty, his heirs and successors, all treasons and traitorous conspiracies which may be formed against him or them: and I do faithfully promise to maintain, support and defend, to the utmost of my power, the succession of the crown; which succession, by an act, intituled 'An Act for the further Limitation of the crown, and better securing the rights and liberties of the subject,' is, and stands limited to the princess Sophia, Electress and Duchess Dowager of Hanover, and the heirs of her body being Protestants; hereby utterly renouncing and abjuring any obedience or allegiance unto any other person claiming or pretending a right to the crown of these realms. And I do swear, that I do reject and detest, as an unchristian and impious position, that it is lawful to murder or destroy any person or persons whatsoever, for, or under pretence of, their being heretics or infidels; and also that unchristian and impious principle, that faith is not to be kept with heretics or infidels: and I further declare, that it is not an article of my faith, and that I do renounce, reject and abjure the opinion, that princes excommunicated by the pope and council, or any authority of the see of Rome, or by any authority whatsoever, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or any person whatsoever: and I do promise, that I will not hold, maintain, or abet any such opinion, or any other opinions contrary to what is expressed in this declaration: and I do declare, that I do not believe that the Pope of Rome, or any other foreign prince, prelate, state or potentate,

hath or ought to have, any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority, or pre-eminence, directly or indirectly, within this realm: and I do solemnly, in the presence of God, profess, testify and declare, that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words of this oath, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatever, and without any dispensation already granted by the Pope, or any authority of the see of Rome, or any person whatever, and without thinking that I am, or can be, acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this declaration, or any part thereof, although the Pope, or any other person or authority whatsoever, shall dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null or void. So help me God."

The Oaths and Declarations prescribed by the Acts of the Irish Parliament to Irish Roman Catholics.

The first is *the Oath of Allegiance and Declaration*, prescribed by the Irish Act of the 13th and 14th of his present Majesty; and is taken by all Irish Roman Catholics.

"I A. B. do take almighty God, and his only Son Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, to witness, that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to our most gracious sovereign Lord King George the Third, and him will defend to the utmost of my power, against all conspiracies and attempts whatsoever that shall be made against his person, crown and dignity; and I will do my utmost endeavour to disclose and make known to his majesty, and his heirs, all treasons and traitor-

ous conspiracies, which may be formed against him or them; and I do faithfully promise to maintain, support and defend, to the utmost of my power, the succession of the crown in his majesty's family, against any person or persons whatsoever, hereby utterly renouncing and abjuring any obedience or allegiance unto the person taking upon himself the style and title of Prince of Wales, in the lifetime of his father, and who since his death is said to have assumed the style and title of King of Great Britain and Ireland, by the name of Charles the Third, and to any other person claiming or pretending a right to the crown of these realms: and I do swear, that I do reject and detest, as unchristian and impious to believe, that it is lawful to murder or destroy any person or persons whatsoever, for or under pretence of their being heretics, and also that unchristian and impious principle that no faith is to be kept with heretics: I further declare, that it is no article of my faith, and that I do renounce, reject and abjure, the opinion that princes excommunicated by the Pope and Council, or by any authority of the see of Rome, or by any authority whatsoever, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or by any person whatsoever; and I do promise, that I will not hold, maintain, or abet, any such opinion, or any other opinion, contrary to what is expressed in this declaration: and I do declare, that I do not believe that the Pope of Rome, or any other foreign prince, prelate, state or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any temporal or civil jurisdiction, power, superiority or pre-eminence, di-

rectly or indirectly, within this realm: and I do solemnly in the presence of God, and of his only Son Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, profess, testify and declare, that I do make this declaration, and every part thereof, in the plain and ordinary sense of the words of this oath, without any evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation whatever, and without any dispensation already granted by the Pope, or any authority of the see of Rome, or any person whatever, and without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man, or absolved of this declaration, or any part thereof, although the Pope, or any other person or persons or authority whatsoever, shall dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null and void from the beginning. So help me God."

The Oath and Declaration prescribed by the Irish Act of the 33d of his present Majesty, and which is taken by all Irish Roman Catholics, wishing to entitle themselves to the benefit of that Act.

"I A. B. do hereby declare, that I do profess the Roman Catholic religion.

"I A. B. do swear that I do abjure, condemn and detest, as unchristian and impious, the principle that it is lawful to murder, destroy, or any ways injure, any persons whatsoever, for or under the pretence of being a heretic: and I do declare solemnly before God, that I believe, that no act in itself unjust, immoral, or wicked, can ever be justified or excused, by or under pretence or colour, that it was done either for the good of the church, or in obedi-

ence to any ecclesiastical power whatsoever: I also declare, that it is not an article of the Catholic faith, neither am I thereby required to believe or profess, that the Pope is infallible, or that I am bound to obey any order, in its own nature immoral, though the Pope, or any ecclesiastical power, should issue or direct such order; but on the contrary I hold that it would be sinful in me to pay any respect or obedience thereto: I further declare, that I do not believe, that any sin whatever committed by me, can be forgiven, at the mere will of any Pope or any priest, or of any person or persons whatsoever, but that sincere sorrow for past sins, a firm and sincere resolution to avoid future guilt, and to atone to God, are previous and indispensable requisites to establish a well-founded expectation of forgiveness; and that any person who receives absolution without these previous requisites, so far from obtaining thereby any remission of his sins, incurs the additional guilt of violating a sacrament: and I do swear, that I will defend, to the uttermost of my power the settlement and arrangement of property in this country, as established by the laws now in being: I do hereby disclaim, disavow and solemnly abjure, any intention to subvert the present church establishment, for the purpose of substituting a Catholic establishment in its stead: and I do solemnly swear, that I will not exercise any privilege to which I am or may become entitled, to disturb and weaken the Protestant religion and Protestant government in this kingdom. So help me God."

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS.

Mr. Belsham on the Controversy between Dr. Priestley and Dr. Horsley.

Bp. Horsley; in reply to the Strictures of the Rev. H. Horsley, on the Calm Inquiry.—Letter II.

Essex House, April 5, 1813.

SIR,

Having I trust sufficiently exculpated myself from the heavy charge of impiety and blasphemy in asserting that an archdeacon was well satisfied at being made a bishop, I might now proceed to state and examine the less formidable allegations of my reverend opponent. But that your readers may better understand the subjects of discussion, I will in this letter exhibit a brief sketch of the controversy between Dr. Priestley and Dr. Horsley.

Dr. Priestley in his First Series of Letters to Dr. Horsley, appeals to Origen as asserting that the Jewish Christians were in general called Ebionites, and that of these, some believed and some disbelieved the miraculous conception, but that all of them considered Jesus as a mere man.

Dr. Horsley, upon the authority of Mosheim, taxes the veracity of Origen, and charges him with *notorious falsehood*, in asserting that the Hebrew Christians, in general had not renounced the Mosaic law: as Origen must have known that after the emperor Adrian had destroyed Jerusalem,

and founded in its neighbourhood the city of *Ælia*, from which all Jews were excluded under pain of death; the majority of Hebrew Christians, who, to avoid the calamities of war, had retired to Pella and its vicinity, when the war was over, renounced the Mosaic ritual, that they might not be taken for Jews, and returned in great numbers to *Ælia*, that they might enjoy the privileges of the *Ælian* colony.

Dr. Priestley not having Mosheim's *Ante-Constantine History* at hand, to which the archdeacon had referred, and not finding in that learned writer's *General Ecclesiastical History*, all the circumstances which Dr. Horsley had mentioned in his *Second Series of Letters*, warmly defends the character of Origen, accuses the archdeacon of having added various particulars to the narrative of Mosheim, ridicules the supposition of a sudden dereliction of the rites of the law, for the sake of securing the municipal privileges of *Ælia*, and treats the whole account of the establishment of an orthodox Jewish church at *Ælia*, as an incredible tale, contradictory to all history, which uniformly represents the church at *Ælia* as consisting wholly of gentile believers, under Marcus, a gentile bishop. Dr. Priestley concludes with accusing his learned opponent as "a falsifier of history and a defamer of the character of the dead."

The archdeacon, stung to the quick by the reproach of his adversary, in his reply, though he contends for the "necessity of helping out by conjecture, the broken accounts of ancient writers," indignantly repels the charge of inventing his facts, and pleads

the authority of Mosheim, for all that he had advanced, both with regard to the character of Origen, and the existence of a church of Hebrew Christians at *Ælia*. But finding that he had leaned too much upon the credit of Mosheim, whose authorities did not, in fact, warrant his assertions, Dr. Horsley set himself in good earnest to search for evidence, both to support his charge against Origen, and to establish his orthodox Jewish church at *Ælia*. In respect to the former, he introduces two quotations from Origen's reply to Celsus, which are very far indeed from proving his accusation: and to support the latter he cites a passage from Jerome, which speaks of Nazarenes, in his time, who believed in Christ. These the archdeacon concludes could be no other than the orthodox descendants of the orthodox church at *Ælia*.

To confirm his position that the Hebrew Christians after Adrian's settlement of the *Ælian* colony, returned from Pella, whither they had retired from the distresses of the war, to *Ælia*, the archdeacon appeals to the authority of Epiphanius, who states that after the desolation of Jerusalem, the disciples returned from Pella, and were residing at Jerusalem, or, says the archdeacon, "more properly *Ælia*," at the time that Aquila resided there, as overseer of the emperor Adrian's works. But he at the same time very prudently deprecates, and warns his good-natured readers not to regard, chronological cavils.

Notwithstanding this, Dr. Priestley in his *Third Series of Letters*, states, in the first place, that the Christians, of whom Epiphanius

speaks, were not those who returned from Pella after Adrian's demolition of Jerusalem, but those who came back, after the war of Vespasian, sixty years before that of Adrian: and secondly, that Aquila was employed by Adrian at Jerusalem, antecedently to the breaking out of the war, and consequently, that the Christians whom he saw and conversed with there, could not be those who returned from Pella, after the war, to enjoy the privileges of the Ælian colony. These two facts completely subvert the foundation of that fine history of the orthodox Hebrew Church, at Ælia, which the archdeacon had borrowed from Mosheim, upon the authority of Epiphanius.

The learned dignitary, now advanced to the See of St. David's, thus finding the whole body of these pious and orthodox emigrants returned upon his hands, could devise no better way of disposing of them, than by keeping them at home, where, as he is pleased to tell his readers, upon his own authority, for he does not even pretend the sanction of history, they behaved very orderly and peaceably, during the Jewish rebellion, and therefore were not included in the emperor's edict, for the banishment of the Jews, but were permitted to settle quietly at Ælia. And though his lordship confesses that they were neither required by the emperor, nor tempted by any promise of civil privileges, to forsake the Mosaic ritual, yet such was the exemplary prudence of these "holy brethren," that they abandoned at once the customs of their forefathers, to which they themselves likewise had been so early and so

fondly attached, and placed themselves under the pastoral care of a gentile bishop, lest by the Roman magistrates they should be mistaken for Jews. The learned prelate having thus "helped out a broken story by his own conjectures," and having introduced these "saints of the primitive church" into good quarters in the Ælian colony, now bids them farewell, and fairly leaves "the holy brethren," to take the best care they can of themselves. "The disturbed foundations of the church of Ælia," says he, "are again settled. I could wish to leave them to their own solidity, to withstand any future attacks." Nor does it, indeed appear that his lordship ever enquired after them any more, or gave himself any further trouble about them.

This new edifice, lighter than air, falls of course to the ground at the touch of Dr. Priestley's wand. The indefatigable and undaunted champion of the divine unity after challenging his learned opponent to renew the charge, advises him for the future, to build his churches of sounder materials, and that when he professes to write history, he would not entirely disregard the humble subject of chronology. Thus content with his victory he retires from the field: but though the exertions of his adversary were rewarded with a mitre, I am forbidden to say that the bishop was *equally well satisfied* with the result of the discussion.

The character of Origen and the existence of an orthodox Hebrew church at Ælia, which discarded the rites of the law are the principal topics of controversy between Dr. Horsley and Dr. Priestley. Other questions, however, of minor

importance, occasionally intervened. Tertullian asserts that the majority of unlearned believers (*idiotæ*) in his time entertained the greatest horror and abhorrence of the doctrine of the Trinity. The bishop, to diminish the weight of Tertullian's testimony, translates *idiotæ*, idiots. No one can suppose that Dr. Horsley was serious in this mistranslation. It is not probable that he expected that it would impose even upon the most ignorant of his readers. Yet Dr. Priestley takes it up very seriously, and charges his opponent with gross ignorance. And the bishop who wished for nothing more than to divert the attention of his readers from the main question, with all due gravity defends his translation, and alledges the authority of Calepine, Ainsworth and others, to justify the sense which he puts upon the word. But he would not for a moment maintain that the common idea annexed to the English word idiot, was the sense in which Tertullian used the word *idiotæ*. And this memorable passage, even according to Dr. Horsley's own translation of it, remains an indisputable and a most illustrious proof of the prevalence of the Unitarian doctrine among the great body of unlearned christians at the end of the second century, and of their aversion to every infringement upon that primary and most important truth, the unity of God.

Dr. Horsley also lays considerable stress upon the epistle of Barnabas as containing the testimony of a writer of the apostolic age, to the orthodoxy of the Hebrew christians. Dr. Priestley contends that the epistle is interpolated. But Jeremiah Jones with

more propriety rejects it altogether, as the silly forgery of some Alexandrian Jew of the second century.

This sketch of the controversy between Dr. Priestley and Dr. Horsley will enable your readers to understand the questions in discussion between the Prebendary of St. Asaph, and the Reviewer of the controversy in the *Calm Inquiry*. With this review the reverend Prebendary professes to be greatly dissatisfied. And if sneers, sarcasms, misquotations, misrepresentations, and verbal cavilling, is to stand for argument, the cause is lost. But as to any thing which resembles the love of truth, fairness of statement, cogency of reasoning, or indeed any knowledge at all of the subject, the reader will look for it in vain through the vaunting pages of this logician of the North.

In one point I agree with my reverend opponent. And as this is almost our only common ground, I will beg leave to state it before I conclude. The reverend Prebendary sets out with the following remark. "Bishop Horsley has declared, that in publishing the tracts his object was not to bring forward any new argument in support of the divinity of our blessed Lord, or of the catholic doctrine of the Trinity, but to *destroy the credit of an author by whom these doctrines had been attacked*, by shewing, that as an ecclesiastical historian, and a Greek scholar, he had no claim to such deference as had been generally paid him in the character of a chemical philosopher."

Yes Sir, this is a true state of the fact. It was the avowed design of Bishop Horsley to destroy the

credit of Dr. Priestley as an ecclesiastical historian, both as to learning and integrity. It was his professed intention to represent Dr. Priestley as totally incompetent to the task which he had undertaken, as too deficient in learning to understand the authorities to which he appeals, as hazarding assertions without proofs, and as from prejudice or ignorance continually mistaking, or perverting, the meaning of the passages which he cites. Happily, in this generous purpose the learned prelate has entirely failed. Here and there he has indeed discovered an error, or pointed out a mistranslation: and more no doubt might have been added. But they are such as do not in the least degree affect Dr. Priestley's general conclusion. And in the points at issue between him and the learned prelate, the victory of the great advocate for the divine unity was decisive and complete. This the Bishop well knew. And though his lordship was no doubt gratified to see the effect produced by his pompous and imposing style upon the unthinking crowd, he would have been the first to laugh to scorn the solemn ignoramus, who should seriously profess to believe that the advantage of the argument remained with him. No Sir, Bishop Horsley knew that he had inadvertently given too much credit to the great name of Mosheim. He knew that Mosheim's authorities would not bear out his assertions. He knew that he had in vain sought for other authorities to support Mosheim. He knew that having failed in these he had sported a hypothesis of his own which would not bear examination for a moment. He knew that in

this state he had retired from the field, leaving his adversary in full possession of the ground. All this the bishop knew, though his son may not; nor am I afraid of being contradicted in this statement by any one who is qualified to judge in the case, and who is under no bias to conceal his opinions.

In my next letter I propose to enter more directly into the refutation of my adversary's cavils. In the mean time,

I am, Sir, &c.

T. BELSHAM.

Letter from Dr. Benson to Mr. Towgood.

Exeter, April 2, 1813.

SIR,

The following Letter from Dr. Benson to Mr. Towgood, was put into my hands by the daughter of the latter. Should you think it deserving a place in your useful Repository, the insertion of it will oblige

Your obedient humble servant,
JAMES MANNING.

London, Feb. 20, 1758.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have herewith sent you a copy of a letter concerning conformity, &c. I was desirous you should see it because I hope you are proceeding in your answer to Powel's Sermon concerning subscription to the 39 articles in any sense, in every sense, and in no sense at all; as articles of truth which are not true; as articles of peace which create endless contentions; as articles of the church of England, which the Divines of that church commonly confute; as articles made to prevent diversity of opinions, and which greatly

increase diversity of opinions; as articles made in the days of bigotry by men who had no critical skill in the Scriptures, to fetter the ages of learning and free enquiry. And yet for 500*l.* per annum, or less money, there are men who will subscribe, who will contend for subscribing to these same articles, whether ministers believe them or not—

—Pudet hæc opprobria—

I am pleased that I have had the happiness to see you once. I shall never see you more in this world. I am delighted with the prospect of meeting you in a better state, where there are no subscriptions to articles required, no bigotry, nor any thing to grieve or offend any more.

With great esteem for you,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

GEORGE BENSON.

Future State of Infants on the Calvinistic Scheme.

Dec. 1, 1812.

SIR,

The letter-writer whom you copy (vol. vii. p. 682.) supposes that modern Calvinists confine salvation to *the dead infants of the elect*. I rather think they indulge a vague, unauthorized notion, that all who are born to die in infancy were included in the covenant of election. Thus the famous assertion, that *there are infants in hell of a span long*, is given up as the rant of some wild fanatic. Yet it is remarkable that Baxter, whose scheme has been supposed to soften the rigours of Calvinism, inclined to the unmerciful notion on the subject of infants' salvation.

VOL. VIII.

2 K

I have a very small volume (1655), entitled *A Sermon of Judgment, preached at Pa. l's, before the Honourable Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London, Dec. 17, 1654, and now enlarged by Richard Baxter*. At p. 33, is the following passage:—
“Obj. *But how shall Infants be judged by the Gospel that were incapable of it?* Answer, *For ought I find in scripture, they stand or fall with their parents, and on the same terms. But I leave each to their own thoughts.*”

At p. 156, Baxter affords the following curious specimen of theological special-pleading. “The eight-and-twentieth excuse, *How could I be saved if Christ did not die for me? He died but for his elect, and none could be saved without his death.* Answer. *He did die for you, and for more than his elect; though he absolutely purposed only their salvation.*” This reminds me of a verse in which one of the *Wesleys* exposed the moderate Calvinism of their time—

He did not do the ruthless deed
Some have more mildly rav'd,
God did not damn them, but decreed
They never should be sav'd.

Is not the same said in prose by the ablest modern advocates for Calvinism? When I once looked into Dr. Williams's Reply to the Bishop of Lincoln, he appeared to me to rob the system of Calvin, of its grand, though horrible consistency; cutting off its natural growth, *reprobation*, and substituting *preterition*, a mere exotic.

IGNOTUS.

A Curious Baptism.

SIR,

Feb. 21, 1813.

Perhaps the account of a bap-

tism which took place in Dublin, about six years ago, may, for its singularity, be worthy of a place in your Repository.

A Moor and a native of Mogadore, Africa,—a strict observer of the religion of Mahomet,—wearing always, of course, the costume of his country, resided a few months in the above city; a family where he occasionally visited, about to baptize their infant, solicited the stranger to stand *Godfather*, which was immediately consented to, and on the appointed day, he appeared splendidly arrayed in his turban and robes at the sacred font, where with due solemnity, he answered to the accustomed interrogatives,—“All this I stedfastly believe.” To add still further to the oddity of the circumstance, the father was a member of the Roman Catholic church, and the mother of the Established one.

I. W.

Theological Queries.

Appleby, Feb. 22, 1813.

SIR,

Being a reader of your valuable work, and as it is a work chiefly designed to promote freedom of inquiry, I trust you will judge no subject unworthy of investigation which stands connected with the promotion of Christian virtue.—Entering most cordially into the same design with yourself, I have taken the liberty of sending a few queries for insertion, if you shall think them proper for it, hoping they may bring forth the abilities of some of your candid and liberal correspondents.

1st, Are we who live under the dispensation of the gospel, to be considered as having a complete

guide to all Christian faith, and practice when we possess the *New Testament only*?

If not, how can it be said that Christ was faithful in all his house as Moses was faithful, see Heb. iii. 2.—If complete, does this bind us to reject all doctrines and practices which are not recorded there, and to receive all that are recorded?

2nd, Are we to consider obedience to what are called positive commands and institutions, as constituting any part of that morality or virtue *essentially* necessary to the Christian character? Or may these be neglected and yet our characters stand approved with God?

These subjects have occupied the writer's attention for some time, and it would afford him great pleasure to see them discussed somewhat at large.

I am, Sir,
PHILOS.

Unitarian Associations.

SIR, *Feb. 16, 1813.*

Situated, as I am, out of the way of information, excepting through the medium of your valuable Repository, I feel great pleasure in reflecting upon the very great advantages arising to the cause of Christianity from the exertions of individuals, as well as from bodies of Christians therein recorded; and I am very thankful to the Divine Being for the pleasure I enjoy in the perusal of this valuable publication from time to time. In your No. for July last, an account is given of the Annual Meeting of the Warwickshire, Western and Southern Unitarian Book Societies. It has frequently occurred to me that the Reports

of these meetings ought to be more generally known. Communication is the life of Society, and why not of Christianity? Certainly it is as applicable to the last as to the first. I sit down with a small congregation of Unitarians, the majority of whom are totally ignorant of these societies and consequently of these meetings; or of the existence of any active proceedings by bodies or societies of men in the cause of rational religion;—nor do they know of the existence of the York Academy, the New Institution in London, or of the Fund. I do not mean to insinuate that the minister is ignorant of these institutions, or that *all* who sit under him are so, but that the majority is, there can be no doubt, and those too who ought particularly to be informed—I mean the lower order. To prevent the continuance of this evil, permit me, Sir, to suggest what to me appears to be an easy and an effectual remedy, and which I shall submit to your better judgment by way of query. Would it not be a great benefit to Unitarian churches, if the Fund in London, and other Unitarian institutions there; the Committee of the York Academy, and every Unitarian association throughout the kingdom, were to impress (by circulars or otherwise) upon each and every minister of a congregation, the necessity of dedicating the fore part of a Sabbath, once a year, (or oftener, as Reports may be made from these institutions,) in reading these Reports? Service may begin with prayer, and end with a hymn and prayer.

It is a well known fact, that most bodies of our dissenting brethren

have recourse to every popular method to inform their respective congregations of the general union of the different branches or members of their general body,—thus keeping alive a universal feeling of religious affection, as well as of local interest. Why shall Unitarians be left at so great a distance in religious zeal?

Many times have I wished to communicate these thoughts, but diffidence and want of ability, such as the subject deserves, has prevented me. I shall now, however, submit them, without fear to your candid consideration, being well assured of your readiness to give them your serious attention, as well as the sanction of your recommendation. I. P.

On the Placability of God.

Ringwood, Dec. 4, 1812.

SIR,

I am induced to call the attention of your readers to a few considerations on this subject, by perusing certain "Remarks on the Quakers' Epistle for 1812," in your number for October, (vol. vii. p. 611). The author of those Remarks appears to labour under similar misconceptions with those which are common to his sect, in regard to the *real* sentiments of all rational and moderate Calvinists, on this article. He seems to consider it as their avowed belief, that the death of Christ was "the *cause* of the placability of God:"—a notion which not one in ten thousand, of those who cordially maintain the doctrine of satisfaction for sin, would, for a moment, tolerate. In reality, the principle which the remarker attributes to "the early Friends," and to the majority of their de-

scendants, in the present day, is precisely that of the persons he opposes;—viz. “that God’s love is not the *effect* of Christ’s satisfaction,” but that “*Christ is the proper gift and effect of God’s love.*” They believe as firmly as the remarker can possibly do, that “the boundless mercy and goodness of God,” is the sole, original cause of our salvation, though that mercy exhibits itself and operates exclusively through the medium of the Redeemer’s death upon the cross, as a suitable attestation to the divine abhorrence of sin, as a glorious display of the Divine character, and a necessary vindication of the divine government. That sentiments somewhat varying from this representation,—sentiments describing the Deity as wrathful and vindictive, appeased only by the extreme sufferings of a Mediator, *may* be found in some of our devout poets, or in the pages of some over-zealous controversialists, is easily admitted. But who that possesses a grain of common candour or common sense, would estimate the opinions of a whole community by so narrow a standard? Let the writings of our many respectable and authorised divines both ancient and modern, be rather allowed to express our real views.

And here, (while it would be easy to adduce testimony from many other sources, equally decisive,) let me crave permission to quote a few passages from a work which well deserves the profound study of men of all parties

“The doctrine of atonement,” say its opposers, “is founded on the *Divine implacability*, inasmuch as it supposes, that to appease the rigid justice of God, it was requisite that punishment should be in-

flicted; and that, consequently, the sinner *could* not, by any means, have been released, had not Christ suffered in his stead. Were this a faithful statement of the doctrine of atonement, there had indeed been just ground for the objection. But this is not the fair representation of candid truth. —Although it is through the merits and intercession of Christ, that we are forgiven; yet these were not the *procuring cause*, but the *means*, by which God, originally disposed to forgive, thought it right to bestow his pardon.—

“The sacrifice of Christ was never deemed by any, who did not wish to calumniate the doctrine of atonement, to have *made* God placable, but merely viewed as the *means* appointed by divine wisdom, by which to bestow forgiveness. And agreeably to this, do we not find this sacrifice every where spoken of as ordained by God himself?—See John iii. 16. —1 John iv. 10.—1 Pet. i. 18, 19, 20.—Rev. xiii. 8.—But still it is demanded, in ‘what way can the death of Christ, considered as a sacrifice of expiation, be conceived to operate to the remission of sins, unless by the appeasing a Being, who otherwise would not have forgiven us?’ To this the answer of the Christian is, ‘I know not, nor does it concern me to know, *in what manner* the sacrifice of Christ is connected with the forgiveness of sins: it is enough, that this is declared by God to be the medium through which my salvation is effected. I pretend not to dive into the counsels of the Almighty. I submit to his wisdom; and I will not reject his grace, because his mode of vouchsafing it is not within my comprehension,’” &c. &c.

At the same time, he shews, by references to Dr. Clarke, Bishop Butler and others, that those great men did not hesitate to say, "that according to the method and dispensation which God's wisdom has chosen, there results a *moral necessity*, of such vindication, founded in the *wisdom* and *prudence* of a Being, who has announced himself to mankind, as an upright Governor, resolved to maintain the observance of his laws." Or, in other words, "that the death of Christ was *necessary*, to make the pardon of sin reconcileable, not, perhaps absolutely with *strict justice*, but it was *necessary*, at least in *this* respect, to make it consistent with the *wisdom* of God, in his good government of the world; and to be a *proper attestation* of his irreconcilable hatred against all unrighteousness."—See Dr. Magee's Discourses on Atonement and Sacrifice, vol i. pp. 23, and 178.

A MODERATE CALVINIST.

Mr. Wright, on an Error in his Journal.

Wisbeach, March 16, 1813.

SIR,

By a letter from a respected friend at Kendal, I find there is an error in the statement given in the Extracts from the Report of the Unitarian Fund, (Vol. vii. p. 773.) The name of the minister of the Unitarian Baptists at Kendal, is *Kay*, not *Cave*. Mr. Kay and his friends were never in Mr. Haldane's connexion, any further than they deemed it their "duty to receive as brethren all those who appeared to them to be holding and walking in the truth." Nor were any letters exchanged

between Mr. Kay and Mr. Haldane on the change of sentiment, which took place among the friends at Kendal, as stated in the before mentioned extracts. I am anxious these mistakes should be corrected, by the insertion of this short article in the Repository.

As Mr. Kay conjectures, I was led into the error which I have pointed out, by respectable friends at Newcastle, from whom I understood the account just as I stated it: they too, as Mr. K. further conjectures, were led into the misconception by the relation given them by a worthy person from Kendal, through a misapplication of names.

Respectfully, Yours, &c.

RICHARD WRIGHT.

On a Passage in Mr. Wright's Journal.

SIR,

In your Number for February last, (p. 132, 133) Mr. Wright has stated, that among the Unitarians in Lancashire and Cheshire, "a change has taken place in the mode of preaching, and that the dry ethical method has given way to the preaching of Unitarianism as the doctrine of the gospel. "Christian discourses," he adds, "have been filled with the sentiments and language of the gospel. In this way, the best morality has been placed on the best foundation, evangelical righteousness on evangelical principles."

Formerly Sir, it was conceived, that nothing was more dry than theology, especially when it was interlarded with metaphysics, or presented in the form of texts detached from their connexion, for

the sake of establishing particular dogmas. Certainly it is not the nature of ethical or moral preaching to be dry. The genius of the preacher may make it so, and would impart the same quality to any other subject. What can be less dry, or more interesting than the moral discourses of Bourn, Fawcett and Walker? If such writings as their's present not good models for Christian preaching, then the idea of the inconsiderate enemy to moral discourses might be adopted, that the sermon on the mount was not a Christian sermon.

If Mr. Wright mean, that Unitarian ministers in Lancashire and Cheshire have been accustomed to preach sermons on moral duties without enforcing them by Christian motives, or by reference to the instructions, character, and example of Jesus Christ, I must take the liberty of dissenting from him, and of concluding, that he has been misinformed. But on this subject, neither a negative, nor a positive can easily be proved, unless by reference to discourses before the public. Should Enfield's Sermons for the use of families, appear in some measure to fall under Mr. Wright's censure, (though surely, they cannot justly be called dry, and though the subject of one is the example of Jesus Christ,) ample amends have undoubtedly been made by many of his posthumous discourses, in which passages from the gospel are expounded and applied, and by the views which he has given on the different sentiments of Christians as relating to the person and offices of their master. In fact, no moral or religious topics are unsuitable to the Christ-

ian preacher, who in the course of long life and service may profitably treat both on natural and rational, on revealed and instituted religion, on the rule of life, or on the rule of faith, on the duties of man to himself, to his neighbour, and to his God, on the moral sense, and on theopathy, or the devout affections, and on the religious doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. Surely all and every one of these in their connexion and tendency, as recommended by the motives, sanctions and examples of the gospel, may justly be styled truly evangelical doctrine.

For relief to his mind at a season of unmerited trouble, Mr. Wood, of Leeds, published a small volume of sermons on the social duties, in which the word Christ may not occur so often as some might wish. Yet these are not less Christian duties, because that epithet is not always prefixed. But, whilst probably Mr. Wood's stated hearers could easily repel the charge, that his sermons in general did not contain "the sentiments and language of the gospel," or that he did *not* "place evangelical righteousness on evangelical principles," it is well known, that both Dr. Priestley and himself imagined religious controversy better fitted for the lecture-room or the press, than for the pulpit. How far they were right or wrong on this subject is not the question, but that on such occasions, as they thought proper, they *spoke out*, and never withheld or disguised the most ingenuous and plainest declaration of their theological sentiments cannot reasonably be denied.

When about the middle of the

18th century, Mr. J. Holland's sermons were published, they were stigmatized in the *Monthly Review* as moral essays, but if it be considered, that they were among the first productions of a youthful mind, smitten with the beauties of the Socratic moral philosophy, desirous to imbibe and transfuse its spirit, and to shew how it was still more refined and improved by Christian ethics, they may deservedly be ranked in the highest class of discourses recommending evangelical duties. These volumes too contain one sermon expressly on the example of Christ, in which the author has avowed his views to be those, which have since been deemed the essence of low Arianism. How far these views might have been changed, or what other modes of instruction the writer might have adopted, if he had been the pastor for any length of time in any particular congregation, or if he had lived beyond the prime of life, it is impossible to discover and unnecessary to imagine. Many of Mr. Philip Holland's sermons also are on moral subjects, but whilst none are closed without a view to Christianity, divine revelation and a future state, the doctrine, that Jesus was the Messiah, who rose from the dead, is expressly and particularly considered, the subject of the personality of the Holy Spirit is most impartially discussed and represented, and in the charge on the character of the Christian preacher, scarcely a topic relative to the authority and religion of the Scriptures is left untouched. If it be said, that these discourses are better fitted for the study than for the pulpit, for well-educated, philosophical and refined

minds, than for the illiterate, they have at least, in subordination to the Bible furnished a source, whence those with more popular talents have drawn, or may draw, the waters of eternal life.

No one, however, who has perused the sermons published by Mr. Turner, of Wakefield, will hesitate to allow, that they are in every just sense as truly and strictly evangelical in style, manner and sentiment, as the posthumous discourses of his friend Mr. Lindsey.

On these grounds therefore, and from the consideration of other circumstances peculiar to myself, which have enabled me to hear more ministers preach, than some, who are constantly engaged in the same office themselves, I conclude Mr. Wright's charge not to be well-founded, or not to be generally applicable.

When Dr. Priestley first avowed himself to be what is now called a Unitarian, he did not know more than three or four of his ministerial brethren, who held the same sentiments. Of those, who were not decided Trinitarians, the greater part were Arians, whose congregations were of a mixed nature. The consequence was, that some of these joined Methodists of different descriptions, and others remained in those societies, which are now called Unitarian.

Whilst the ministers in the latter were themselves engaged in the laborious process of theological inquiry, and unwilling without full conviction to surrender the peculiar sentiments of their forefathers; instead of directly attacking the prejudices of their less informed people, they judged it a wiser plan to adhere to the un-

controverted and incontrovertible principles of the gospel, as the surest basis of just, liberal and Christian opinion. Had they, as their own minds were opened and enlightened, declared every doctrine, or rather opposed every mysterious or superstitious one, before they could supply the proper evidence for others, or were themselves perhaps completely convinced they might have driven many weaker, yet well disposed characters into the fastnesses of Trinitarian mystery. But by a more gradual, though surer method, by the process of calm, judicious, yet free, impartial and unbiassed inquiry, many congregations as well as ministers have been imperceptibly led to embrace those principles, which Mr. Wright recommends with characteristic good temper, with earnest apostolical zeal, with unaffected benevolence, and with truly Christian piety. His is undoubtedly the best mode for himself, and for those who embrace his views. That it will also do much good, and contribute to the spread of truth, I have not the smallest doubt. Nor do I blame, but rather praise, those ministers of ardent, independent minds, who scruple not in the most public manner to avail themselves of the talents which God has given them, to avow their sentiments in direct terms, and to oppose and confute the doctrines of mystery and superstition before the most crowded audiences: but others in different circumstances, and with inferior powers may do well to consider, whether it is not a better plan for them to proceed more gradually, to build the doctrines on the evidences of Christianity, and to

make the whole a system of education for the young rather than subjects of public discussion, before the mind is always sufficiently prepared for their consideration. Hence it seems, as if those ministers, who preceded the present generation of Unitarians, had judiciously and effectually prepared the way for them. Perhaps then they might be justified in saying to their successors, Others have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours.

J. H.

*Mr. Wright to Mr. Strephon.**Wisbeach, March 16, 1813.*

SIR,

In yours to me, (page 31) you say, "Many of your readers would gladly see your reply to the following question; viz. If some members of a congregation have heard others deny the divine mission, miracles and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ; would the former, on seeing the latter come to his table, be guilty of a breach of christian charity in declining communion with them?"

This, Sir, is a case not likely to occur in any Dissenting congregation; where the road to worldly emolument, honour, or power, is not over the Lord's table, and secular interest is not advanced by partaking of his supper: yet I will not say it is an impossible case. Christian charity forbids our concluding such a case to exist without the most clear and cogent proof. Persons may entertain such views of the divine mission, miracles and resurrection of Jesus as others suppose amount to a denial of those great facts; but the persons them-

selves so far from perceiving this, may sincerely believe they receive them in the only light in which they are defensible. We may hear others express themselves in terms which seem to imply a denial of the divine mission &c. of Jesus; but if on farther enquiry we find it was not their intention, and they did not understand their words to express such a denial, we ought not to conclude against their christianity. Persons may have doubts, these they may express in strong terms, they may sometimes assume the ground taken by unbelievers, when conversing with those from whom they hope to receive a solution of their difficulties, and an increase of information; yet on the whole the evidence of the divine mission of Jesus &c. may preponderate with them. If possessed of common honesty, their coming to the Lord's table, when they have no worldly end to gain by doing it, is a stronger proof of their faith in Christ than words casually spoken are of their unbelief; nor ought it to be concluded they are influenced by corrupt motives unless we have full proof of it. But suppose the case to be real, have we a right to withdraw from the Lord's table because they are there? Ought we to expel them if it be in our power? To the first of these questions, I reply; if we believe it our duty to attend the Lord's table, we ought not to neglect it merely because some may attend there hypocritically; if we esteem it a privilege, should we neglect it because some abuse it? The advice of Paul is that each person should examine himself, not others. By appearing at the Lord's table we renew the

expression of our faith in Christ, not our entire conviction of the faith of others. To the second, I reply; we can have no right authoritatively to exclude any from the Lord's table, for this clear reason, because *it is the Lord's*. Jesus is the only master, and has not delegated his authority to us. Religious hypocrisy is undoubtedly a great crime, and if unbelievers attend the Lord's table they are guilty of it: such cannot eat in faith, but are self-condemned. It can be no breach of christian charity to declare that we do not acknowledge such to be christian brethren; we must view them as *tares* among the *wheat*; but we know who hath said, Let both grow together till the harvest. It cannot be wrong, and I think duty requires it of us, to remonstrate with such persons, and use every means to convince them of the impropriety of their conduct. This is all we have a right to do, and this I think will be sufficient to deter them from coming to the Lord's table.

Respectfully Yours,
R. WRIGHT.

Addition to the List of Pupils under Mr. Aikin, while at Kibworth, p. 164.

Rev. John Hall, a native of Sheffield, and nephew to the Rev. Samuel Sanderson, of Bedford, who undertook the care of his education, and afterwards placed him under the tuition of Dr. Ashworth, at Daventry. Mr. Hall was for several years minister of a congregation at Stannington, near Sheffield, from whence he removed to the English church at Rotterdam, in Holland, where

it is supposed he is yet living.—Cotemporary with him, though his senior, was the late Rev. *Thomas Robins*, who succeeded Dr. Ashworth in the congregation, and the academy at Daventry. A man of distinguished eminence as a christian, a preacher and a tutor. See a brief memoir of him by Mr. Watson, the present minister of Daventry. See also *Letters of the Rev. Job. Orton, to Dissenting ministers*. Vol. ii. p. 53—73.

S. P.

A Family Bible.

SIR,

I much approve the proposal of the Bible Christian, p. 178, but wish to suggest what I cannot but think an improvement of it. Which is, to correct the common translation, where it is agreed by all parties to be erroneous, or where the phraseology is obsolete, or indelicate, as I am sorry to say it is to such a degree in some places, that no modest person could read some verses to a family, and none could hear them without confusion of face.

R. S.

Extract from an old Scottish Confession of Faith.

Birmingham, Dec. 15, 1812.

SIR,

The enclosed (if you think proper to insert it in your Miscellany) may yield some entertainment, and perhaps instruction to your readers. At any rate it is much at your service, either to reprint or to burn it.

Yours, &c.

ROBERT LITTLE.

It may be new information to some, that the reformed church of Scotland

has had several different confessions of faith. The one which is now subscribed by its ministers, is the most modern, and was the joint production of English and Scotch Commissioners, met at Westminster. But the Confession avowed by the Scotch church, previously to that time, was composed by John Knox and his coadjutors, and is remarkable for a greater degree of simplicity and purity of sentiment. It was drawn up in Latin, and an English translation is annexed to it, dated August 1560. We give the following extract, which is worthy the attentive perusal of the reader. It is—

“Sect. xviii. *Of the notis, be the quhilk the trewe Kirk is decernit fra the false, and quha sall be Judge of the doctrine.—*

“Because that Sathan from the beginning hes laboured to deck his pestilent Synagoge with the title of the Kirk of God, and hes inflamed the hertes of cruel murtherers, to persecute, trouble and molest the trewe Kirk and members thereof, as Cain did Abell, Ismael Isaac, Esau Jacob, and the haill Priesthead of the Jewes Christ Jesus himselve, and his Apostles after him. It is ane thing maist requisite, that the true Kirk be decernit fra the filthie Synagoges, be clear and perfite notis, least we being deceived, receive and imbrace to our awin condemnation, the ane for the uther. The notes, signes and assured takens whereby the immaculate spouse of Christ Jesus is knawen fra the horrible harlot, the Kirk malignant, we affirme, are nouthier antiquitie, title usurpit, lineal descence, place appointed, nor multitude of men approving ane error: for Caine in age and title was preferred to Abel and Seth: Jerusalem had prerogative above all places of the eird, where alsua were the priests lineally descended fra Aaron, and greater number followed the Scribes, Pharises, and priestes, then unfainedly beleaved and approved Christ Jesus and his doctrine: and zit, as we suppose, no man of sound judgment will grant that ony of the forenamed were the Kirk of God. The notes therefore of the trew Kirk of God, we beleeve, confesse and avow to be, first, the trew preaching of the worde of God, into the quhilk God hes revealed himselve unto us, as the writings of the prophets and apostles dois declair. Secondly, the right administration of the Sacraments of Christ Jesus, quhilk man be annexed unto the word and promise of God, to seale and

confirm the same in our hearts. Last, ecclesiastical discipline uprightlie ministered, as Goddis worde prescribes, whereby vice is repressed, and vertew nurished. Wheresoever then thir former notes are scene, and of ony time continue (be the number never so fewe, about two or three) there, without all doubt, is the trew Kirk of Christ: who, according unto his promise, is in the middis of them. Not that universall, of quhilk we have before spoken, bot particular, sik as wes in Corinthus, Galatia, Ephesus and uther places, in quhilk the ministry was planted by Paul, and were of himselfe named the kirks of God: and sik kirks we the inhabitantis of the realme of Scotland, professoris of Christ Jesus, professis ourselfis to have in our citties, townes and places reformed, for the doctrine taucht in our kirkis, contained in the written worde of God, to wit in the buiks of the Auld and New Testamentis, in those buikis we meane, quhilk of the ancient have been reputed canonicall. In the quhilk we affirme, that all thingis necessary to be beleaved for the salvation of mankind, is sufficiently expressed. The interpretation quhairof, we confesse, neither appertaines to private nor publick persone, neither zit to ony Kirk, for ony preheminance or prerogative, personallie or locallie, quhilk ane hes above ane uther, bot apperteines to the Spirite of God, be the quhilk also the Scripture was written. When controversie then happines, for the right understanding of ony place or sentence of Scripture, or for the reformation of ony abuse within the Kirk of God, we ought not sa meikle to luke what men before us have said or done, as unto that quhilk the Halie Ghaist uniformelie speakes within the body of the Scriptures, and unto that quhilk Christ Jesus himself did, and commanded to be done. For this is ane thing universally granted, that the Spirite of God, quhilk is the Spirite of unitie, is in nathing contrarious unto himself. Gif then the interpretation, determination, or sentence of ony Doctor, Kirk, or Councell, repugne to the plaine word of God, written in ony uther place of the Scripture, it is a thing maist certaine, that there is not the true understanding and meaning of the Haly Ghaist, although that counceles, realmes, and nations, have approved and received the same. For we dare not receive or admit ony interpretation quhilk repugnes to ony principal part of our

faith, or to ony uther plaine text of Scripture, or zit unto the rule of charitie.*

Quaker Doctrine of the Trinity.

London, 9th of 3rd mo. 1813.

I was surprised to find in the last number of thy publication, a paper which professes to give, from good authority, the belief of the Society of Friends, on the subject of what is called the Trinity. I hope thou wilt give me an early opportunity of correcting any wrong impression, which this article may have made upon the minds of thy readers, by informing them, that the Trinity, so called, was never acknowledged in any manner whatever, by our Society; *and that the very term even is disallowed by our body, as being nowhere to be found in the Holy Scriptures.* I should have supposed, from the tenour of the communication, that thy correspondent, N. C., was better acquainted with the history of our Society, than to suppose that we subscribed to any creed whatever, except the Bible can be termed a creed. I have been a member of this Society many years, and I confess, I never saw or heard of a Quaker Creed; and, doubtless had there been one, it would have been promulgated by the founder of our Society, or by some of his contemporaries. A creed, in the strict sense of the word, we cannot have; it would subvert the corner stone of our religious profession; for seeing that we regard the Scriptures themselves as a *secondary*, not a primary rule of faith, how could we subscribe to a particular formula of doctrine, agreed

* See Coll. of Conf. of Faith, &c. vol. ii, p. 65. Edit. 1722.

upon by a certain number of individuals? We venerate the scriptures; we regard them as the choicest gift of God to man; but we hold, that they cannot be rightly understood, unless we are assisted by a portion of that spirit which dictated them to the inspired writers. Every individual, therefore, is left to the *free, unbiassed* interpretation of the scriptures, as made known to him by that light, or grace, with which he has been favoured, and which will be in proportion to his humble reliance upon divine aid. Thus we maintain, that the most learned commentaries are of no avail, and that the unlettered believer, if he come to the perusal of the holy writings with a pure and upright intention, may obtain a more perfect comprehension of the will of God, than the most erudite collegian, who relies upon his knowledge of the dead languages.* It must, therefore, be evident that the Society of Friends have no creed, in the popular sense of the word; and

* For I have known some of my friends, who profess the same faith with me, faithful servants of the Most High God, and full of divine knowledge of his truth, as it was inwardly and immediately revealed to them by the Spirit, from a true and living experience, who not only were ignorant of the Greek and Hebrew, but even some of them could not even read their own vulgar language, who being pressed by their adversaries, with some citations out of the English translation, and finding them to disagree with the manifestation of truth, in their own hearts, have boldly affirmed the Spirit of God never said so, and that it was certainly wrong; for they did not believe that any of the holy prophets or apostles had ever written so, which, when I on this account, seriously examined, I really found to be errors and corruptions of the translators.—*Barclay's Apology*, 4th ed. p. 61.

as we maintain, that no human assistance or skill can unfold the truths of Revelation, as recorded in the scriptures, thy correspondent must be in an error, when he asserts, *that a member of our Society has been expelled for questioning the doctrine of the Trinity*. The Society, *as a body*, never pretended to interpret the scriptures, and as for the Trinity, they do not admit even the term, as being no where to be found in the scriptures. Thy correspondent, N. C., should be careful of using any expression, especially in print, that may mislead the serious enquirer after Christian truth.

I am thy Friend,

A. B.

Mr. Flower's Strictures on Mr. Belsham's Account of Robert Robinson, in his Memoirs of Theophilus Lindsey.

Harlow, Feb. 4, 1813.

SIR,

Having in my letter inserted in your last, (p. 17) vindicated the integrity of Mr. Robinson, I trust, to the satisfaction of your readers, from the attack of Mr. Belsham, I proceed to notice some other passages in the work I have quoted, respecting his opinions and those of his friends and admirers. In a letter to a friend, Mr. R. as we have seen, assigned the following reason, amongst others, for declining to answer Mr. Lindsey's *Examination of the Plea*.—"His faith stands on criticisms; and my argument is, that if the doctrine require critical proof it is not popular, and therefore not divine:" on which the learned biographer remarks as follows:—

"It is said to have been a favourite maxim of this extraordinary man at one time of his life—*Criticism is a good thing in its place, but woe to the system which depends upon it.* And from this it has been weakly inferred by some of Mr. Robinson's admirers, whose zeal exceeded their knowledge, that a doctrine supported by criticism *must* be erroneous, because, forsooth, the common people could not understand it. These wise men, it seems, are not aware that the main object of scripture criticism is, to discover the sense which would be most obvious to those for whose immediate use the scriptures were written, which must, no doubt, be the true sense, however contrary to modern ideas and prejudices. That Mr. R. was not serious in this sarcastic reflection upon criticism, or that he afterwards thought more rationally on the subject, is evident from a letter to a friend," an extract from which, given by Mr. B. is too long for quotation; the substance is a commendation of "sober, just criticism," and a reproof to those who, although excessively dogmatical and censorious, in their explanation of the phraseology of scripture, "never knew what criticism was."

Here I beg leave to remark, that if Mr. B. instead of drawing his inferences against a supposed opinion of Mr. Robinson's, and holding up his admirers to ridicule, on a mere report—"It is said," the invention probably of some *John O'Nokes* or *Tom O'Styles*, had examined what Mr. Robinson himself had written on the subject, he might have spared himself the trouble of writing the above paragraph. Indeed, Mr. R. on so

many occasions, fully explained himself on this topic, that had even the superficial reader of his works not understood him, it might have excited some surprise. It was a favourite opinion of Mr. Robinson's, and which forms one of the grand features of his writings, that the gospel being preached by our Saviour to the poor, and consequently designed (in contradistinction to all the systems of heathen philosophy) for the use of the very lowest classes of the people in all ages and countries, these classes were in all matters essential to salvation, proper judges of its meaning; and although learning and critical skill were useful in their proper places, that a poor man possessing neither, might attain to a competent knowledge of the most important truths of revelation. Had Mr. B. recollected what Mr. R. had asserted on this very point, in the work on which he was animadverting, he would have perceived that the author had adopted that just canon of criticism, which, in this instance, is laid down by Mr. B. and which Mr. R. had quoted from the Bishop of Carlisle. (Dr. Law). "There can be no better canon of interpretation," says Mr. R., "than that which an amiable prelate has given us:—*scripture is to be taken in that sense in which the common people took it.*" This subject is so frequently illustrated and enforced in Mr. Robinson's writings, that I am under some difficulty, from which to select in the volumes now before me. I will, however, confine myself to the *Plea*, in which the author expresses his opinions in language equally just and beautiful.

"We do not think it necessary

to enter on learned arguments. A doctrine supported only by criticisms, the understanding of which requires much literary skill, is certainly a doctrine not intended for the bulk of mankind. All truths which fall under the notice of both the learned and unlearned part of mankind, are subject to learned objections, and to popular objections, and consequently they are to be defended by learned and by popular arguments. A plain Christian ought to propose his doubts, if he have any, about the truth of a doctrine; but when his own doubts are removed by the force of plain, popular reasoning, he ought not to suffer his mind to be bewildered in Greek and Hebrew characters, the reasonings on which he does not understand. It is the glory of all the doctrines of Christianity, and particularly that of Christ's divinity, to give evidence to common observation, and to plain good sense."

In another part of the same work, replying to objectors, he observes as follows:—"Says a third, you cannot be so ignorant as you pretend to be. You have read the great Dr. Clarke. Have you never seen those critical dissections of texts by learned men, which explain all the passages that seem to support your nostrum, and prove that they are all on the opposite side. He [the plain Christian] would beg leave to reply:—I have read Dr. Clarke, and a hundred doctors more; and I have read, also, a saying of one, who, although he was no graduate, was greater than them all. He says:—*Call no man master upon earth, for one is your master, even Christ.* Yes, I have seen many a critical anatomist dissect a text; but while he in-

structed me in occult science, he destroyed that general pleasing effect the Creator had produced by the whole. You can never persuade me, that an article so important as the doctrine of the *object* of our worship is allowed to be, lies concealed in depths of erudition. The belief of Christ's divinity is an effect, I think, produced by the features of the face of revelation, if you will pardon the expression. I have all the veneration for Dr. Clarke, that I ought to have, but, in my opinion, I could make more converts to the being of a God, with an oyster and a nettle, than he could with all his mathematical propositions. Mathematics and criticisms may confirm a wise man in religion, but woe be to the religion that hangs upon them."*

These opinions on the nature and use of criticism, were uniformly maintained by the author, nor has Mr. Belsham produced evidence which has a tendency to prove he was, in any degree, inconsistent on this head. As to those "wise men, whose zeal exceeded their knowledge," and who "weakly inferred that a doctrine supported by criticism *must* be erroneous, *because*, forsooth, the common people could not understand it," Mr. Belsham's "zeal has," I fear, "exceeded *his* knowledge," in holding up such idiots to the world as Mr. Robinson's admirers. "*It is said*," (and this is the only answer, which insinuations so unworthy the Christian, or the man of learning or liberality deserve:—) "*It is said*" that these "wise men" of *Gotham*

* Plea for the Divinity of Christ, 4th ed. p. 9, 10, 163. Or Miscel. Works, vol. iii. p. 9, 104.

never had an existence but in Mr. Belsham's imagination.

But, Mr. Robinson, as Mr. B. has told his readers, although convinced of his error, refusing, contrary to his promise, to retract it on conviction, and despising criticism, "soon recovered the tenor of his mind; and wisely profiting by rebuke," (it is to be hoped his example will not be lost sight of even by the *learned*) "he paid greater attention to the important question, not disdaining to call in the aid of sober and just criticism, and in a short time reformed his opinion, and became decidedly Anti-trinitarian. This is a known fact. I shall mention but one proof of it. In a letter to a friend dated March 4, 1789, speaking of an aged minister who had applied for relief to the Baptist board, he says;—'Instead of sending him charity they sent him faith, and informed him that they had made a law not to relieve any except they subscribed a creed, a human creed, which they sent him; and the first article of which is:—There are three divine persons in the unity of the Godhead! Absolute nonsense! supported by tyranny over men's consciences.'

The first thing I request the reader here to notice, is the *date* of the letter quoted. Mr. B. represents Mr. Robinson's conversion as taking place "a short time after he was suffering the rebukes of conscience," "stung to the quick," "convinced of his error," "resolved, however," contrary to his promise, "to keep a prudent silence;" but this "short time," appears to have been four years afterwards, about fifteen months before his death; but what is somewhat surprising, the letter quoted

in proof of this "known fact," affords not a particle of evidence of any "reformation," or even alteration of opinion; this indeed must be plain to every attentive reader of Mr. Belsham's account; for he informs us in the second page from that which contains the above quotation, that "the Plea for the Divinity of Christ, is framed more upon the Sabellian than the high Arian scheme, and that he" (Mr. R.) "tells Dr. Jebb, in a letter written at the time of its first publication,—'It is not impossible, that our sentiments, much as they seem to differ, may, after all, differ less than they appear to do.'"

In a letter, written by Dr. Priestley, to Mr. Lindsey, shortly after the death of Mr. Robinson, inserted in the "Appendix to the Memoirs," the Doctor, after hinting that Mr. R. at the time he wrote the *Plea*, held what is called the "indwelling scheme," adds,—"he said in my hearing, he always thought the doctrine of the Trinity an absurdity." Now, although I apprehend Dr. Priestley was not quite correct in his report of what Mr. R. said, as the latter was certainly a Trinitarian, judging by his confession of faith, at his ordination, yet if instead of "always," we substitute the words *for many years*, this will appear to be the fact; and if we consider the mistakes to which Dr. Priestley was occasionally subject, but which I firmly believe were sincere, *that* alluded to appears comparatively trivial.

From the evidence, however, thus adduced by Mr. Belsham, the conclusion naturally follows, that the change recorded with so much triumph, happens to be—no change at all!

If any doubt remain on this sub-

ject, I could produce abundant evidence, from my own conversation with Mr. Robinson, and from his "Miscellaneous Works," that he was not a Trinitarian in the common acceptance of the word, at the period when he wrote his *Plea*, and when the work and its author were in the meridian of their popularity; but as I have adduced this evidence on another occasion,* I shall not here repeat it: there is, however, an excellent discourse of Mr. Robinson's, just published in a volume of his "Posthumous Works," on "The Corruptions of Christianity," so conclusive on this point, that I must beg leave to transcribe an extract, and which will probably be new to the majority of your readers. The discourse was preached to the author's congregation, at Cambridge, in the year 1780, when the fourth edition of the *Plea* had been just published, and, let it be recollected, five years before Mr. Lindsey published his *Examination*; that *Examination* which converted Mr. Robinson from a Trinitarian to an Anti-trinitarian!

"In the first place, the church of Rome introduced into Christianity the idea of *plurality*, and joined it to the idea of *Deity*. What I mean is this:—Christ taught the apostles that there was *ONE GOD*, and but *ONE*, and *one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus*: the apostles kept on teaching this till they died, and they preserved, with all imaginable care, the Unity of God;—and with a great deal of reason. One God was enough for any

worshipper; and to add ten thousand would be nothing but idolatry. But what did the Church of Rome do? It threw into the idea of *Deity*, (*Deity* signifies Godhead) *plurality*, which is more than one. It was a saying, my brethren, of the apostle Paul, and it was the faith of the primitive Christian church, to *others*, to the gentiles, there are *Gods many and Lords many*, but to *us*, that is to *us* Christians, *there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ*. But now, it may be said, to *Papists* there are *Gods many, and Lords many*, just as there is in the pagan world, but to *us* Protestants, there is—Ah! have not I said too much—there ought to be but *one God, and one Mediator and Lord, Christ Jesus*. You will ask me perhaps, how Protestants came by this? I will tell you what I think, my brethren. The common *popular* notion about a *Trinity*, is a relick of the old Popish idolatry, and the too prevailing gross ideas about the *Father, Son, and Spirit*, the dividing the *Deity* into *persons*, the naming of buildings and churches, in consequence of such notions, is a species of the same defilement.*"

To sum up the evidence on this point. It is clear that in the year 1780, when Mr. Robinson published the fourth edition of his "Plea," he was an Anti-trinitarian. Five years afterwards, Mr. Lindsey published his *Examination*, on reading which, we are gravely told, Mr. R. was "stung to the quick, under the rebukes of his conscience," and convinced of his error; which, however, in violation of his promise, he refused to retract "resolving to keep a prudent silence;" but that "in a

* Memoirs prefixed to vol. i. of Robinson's Miscellaneous Works.

* Posthumous Works, p. 59—61.

short time," that is, four years afterwards—"it is a known fact, he recovered the tenor of his mind, reformed his opinion and became"—what would you suppose, reader? Why truly "he became" what he was ten years before, "decidedly Anti-trinitarian"!!! So much for this wonderful and much vaunted conversion.

"It is not quite clear," adds the learned biographer, "to what distance from the standard of orthodoxy this ingenuous and inquisitive man carried his speculations upon the subject of the person of Christ." To this opinion I cordially assent; and this being the fact, what a pity is it, that the different parties who have been so eager to discover the precise "distance," and have written as dogmatically as if they had made the complete discovery, did not leave the point to be settled by the person most interested, and by an appeal to his writings. If, instead of branding him with party names, and throwing out insinuations which tend materially to injure his character;—if, instead of wasting their time in fruitless inquiries, they had attended to his invaluable writings, which contain such a treasure of instruction and entertainment, so much rational, scriptural and practical piety, and recommended them to others, leaving unsettled what the author had not explained, to the gratification of their curiosity, or to the extent of their wishes, they would have acted quite as wise a part, and have been employed much more profitably.

But Mr. Belsham, after bewil-
dering himself in so many mazes,
was not content with having fortu-
nately discovered the right road.

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He must seek for farther evidence to enable him to find out the precise "distance" Mr. R. had departed from the popular faith; but, after all, he leaves the matter as uncertain as he found it. We are referred to the last week of Mr. Robinson's life, when on a visit at Birmingham, and when it is acknowledged his bodily health and his mental powers were so impaired that little stress is to be laid on what proceeded from (as he so affectingly termed himself,) "the shadow of Robert Robinson." Dr. Priestley's Sermon on his death, is quoted as follows: "What most of all distinguished Mr. Robinson, was his earnest love of truth, and his laborious search after it. Notwithstanding his long attachment to the doctrine of the Trinity, yet continuing to read and think on the subject, he came at length to change his opinion, and before he died, he was one of the most zealous Unitarians." When the Dr. made these hasty assertions he had no idea, that he should in less than a fortnight afterwards, state, that "he *always* thought the doctrine of the Trinity an absurdity."—When it is added, "he became one of the most zealous Unitarians," in the sense understood by Dr. Priestley and Mr. B. I affirm there is no evidence to prove such assertion. The Doctor "expressing his delight in Mr. Robinson's conversation, and his disappointment in his preaching," says, "his discourse was unconnected and desultory, and his manner of treating the Trinity savoured rather of burlesque than serious reasoning." The latter statement appears to be just; for, as I was informed by an Unitarian acquaintance who heard

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the sermon, Mr. Robinson when alluding to the vulgar doctrine, said:—"There are many who believe in three persons in the Deity, or three Gods. Now we are informed in scripture, that the *ONE GOD fills heaven and earth*; where then can they find room for the other *two*?" I have nothing to say in defence of this feeble effusion of an almost worn out, but once most vigorous mind; but it must, I think, strike the reader, that the opinion meant to be conveyed, in no degree varies from that inculcated in the discourse I have quoted, preached at a time when his faculties were in their prime, and when he was in the habit of receiving the flatteries even of the *orthodox*.

Mr. Belsham has, however, "no doubt" that Mr. Robinson was, at the close of his life a "decided Unitarian, in the sense in which Dr. Priestley always used the word, that is, as a believer in the proper humanity of Christ." I could, however, assign various reasons, why I am obliged to "doubt" the correctness of this statement; but as I fear I have already intruded on the patience of your readers, I must be content with assigning one just quoted, from Mr. B. and which I must beg leave to re-quote, by which it appears he entertained a similar "doubt" himself, although it was so speedily exchanged for full assurance.—"It is *not quite clear* to what distance from the standard of orthodoxy this ingenuous and inquisitive man carried his speculations upon the subject of the person of Christ." Mr. B. however, presently adds,—"It is said that Mr. R. had avowed Unitarian principles in conversation, before his constitution was impaired;" to which it is quite suf-

ficient to reply—*It is said he had not.*

Mr. Belsham has, in various parts of Mr. Lindsey's Memoirs, volunteered as the expositor and corrector of the mistakes of Dr. Priestley, most of which would probably have been soon lost sight of, in the general excellence of his character, had they not been thus revived and recorded by his *friend*. It is, however, rather unfortunate, that in correcting the mistakes of the Doctor, he was not more cautious of committing mistakes of almost equal magnitude himself. "It is certain," says Mr. B. "that Dr. Priestley must have been misinformed, when told by one of Mr. R.'s congregation," a year before the death of his pastor, "that they became almost universally Unitarians." How any one could make such an egregious blunder it is difficult to say, and useless to inquire; and as Mr. B. himself gave it no credit, why record and thus perpetuate what had been much better forgotten: but, the biographer adds,—"many of the congregation had become decided Unitarians, though many, and, *perhaps*, the majority, thought differently." I hope I shall not be thought too presuming when, in consequence of a ten years residence at Cambridge, and having been well acquainted with the church, of which I was a member, as well as with the congregation in general, I think myself almost as well qualified to judge on this point as Mr. B. and I do firmly believe that the number of Unitarians, (I use the word in the same sense as Mr. B.) did not, at any period of Mr. R.'s life, nor at his death, amount, in a congregation of four or five hundred people, to half-a-dozen; and I farther de-

declare my belief as firmly, that there was not an individual who ever thought his own peculiar sentiments on this subject, of sufficient consequence to attempt disturbing the church or congregation, or to induce him to separate from them. The statement of one undoubted fact will afford complete demonstration of the correctness of my assertions. Shortly after Mr. Robinson's death, the church and congregation gave a unanimous invitation to the Rev. Robert Hall, of Bristol, to the pastoral office; a gentleman who, although differing in some respects from his predecessor, in his doctrinal sentiments, and his sentiments on the subjects of civil and religious liberty, was as similar as could be expected in a thinking man who judged for himself, instead of being shackled by a creed. Those who were in the habit of hearing Mr. Hall, and who were confidentially conversant with him, will agree with me in the declaration, that although he was a believer in the Divinity of Christ, which he too explained differently from the great majority of those who hold the popular doctrine, he was not at that time a Trinitarian. He agreed with his predecessor in rejecting the doctrine of *three persons*, and that of the personality of the Holy Spirit. His Christian candour was likewise, in many respects similar. I have heard from his pulpit, respectable ministers of Arian and Socinian sentiments, and have frequently witnessed his testimony to the great abilities and moral worth of Dr. Priestley, declaring, "if the Doctor ever visited Cambridge, he should be welcome to his pulpit." His admirable publication—*Remarks on a Sermon of the Rev. John Clayton, sen.* in which that gentleman had reviled the character of the Doctor, and of the Dissenters in general for their endeavours to obtain the repeal of the intolerant and profane *Test and Corporation Acts*; expressing his wish, that "what was at rest might not be disturbed:"—and his equally admirable *Apology for the Freedom of the Press, and for General Liberty*, prove, likewise, that he, at that time, entered into the spirit of his predecessor's grand and noble sentiments on those subjects.*

Mr. Belsham has thought proper to add:—"This mixture of jarring and inconsistent opinions in a religious society is always to be expected, where the eloquence of the speaker and not the truth of principles is the bond of union." What a reflection on a Christian Society which had been chiefly raised by Mr. R. from the lowest to a most flourishing state, the members of which had for so many years, sat under his—not merely eloquent, but rational, scriptural and practical instructions, enforced by his life, his writings and "his

* Some of Mr. Hall's friends may think it injustice to hold up his former sentiments, without mentioning the revolution that has taken place in his mind, since he left Cambridge. He is now an orthodox Trinitarian, and a warm opponent of *heresy*; and if an article in the *Eclectic Review*, exposed in a late *Monthly Repository*, be, as currently reported, Mr. Hall's (and if it be not, it ought, in justice to his character, to be contradicted), he has displayed the zeal of a new convert with a witness! The revolution in the Rev. gentleman's political sentiments has sufficiently appeared in some of his printed sermons.

labours of love," in the surrounding villages! — a reflection as groundless as uncandid, and as unwarrantable as some I have noticed, cast upon their pastor. Their "bond of union" was not "the eloquence of the preacher," so much as "the truth of his principles," of principles the most important, because they were the most practical. Although there might be differences of opinion on certain controverted points, as there will be in a greater or less degree in every Christian society under heaven, where the number is considerable, and their minds are not in a stagnant state, there was no "jarring;" and I earnestly hope that all societies in similar circumstances, will act with similar Christian prudence, and that no individuals will be found pestering the great majority with their own peculiar opinions, careless of the risk of distracting a flourishing interest. Mr. Belsham, in this reflection, has afforded too evident proof, that he can, at times, take the same liberties with the religious character of communities, as with that of individuals.

I have thus, Sir, endeavoured, I trust not unsuccessfully, to defend the character of Mr. Robinson, of his congregation, and of his *real* friends and admirers, from the attacks of Mr. Belsham. The task, I assure you, considering attendant circumstances, has not been a very pleasant one. The party which arrogates to itself the appellation of *orthodox*, such writers as the Rev. Messrs. Andrew Fuller, Bogue and Bennett, not forgetting the Rev. Dr. Rippon, with others of a similar stamp, had, in a way which reflects no great

credit, on either their understandings or their hearts, endeavoured, by misrepresentations the most gross, to stab the reputation and to prevent the usefulness of a man, whose variegated excellencies they must be sensible, (I trust they have still so much modesty left,) are far above *their* reach. Indignant as I have always been at the conduct of men, who from his flatterers became his revilers, *that* indignation has been succeeded by horror, on reading, in a letter of Dr. Priestley's, the most affecting exclamation, proceeding from the bursting heart of a Christian minister of keen sensibility, reflecting on the cruel treatment he had received from those who had long enjoyed his valuable but undeserved friendship;—"They have killed me." Treatment, not only something different, but directly opposite, might naturally have been expected from a gentleman of considerable talents, of great learning, the enlightened philosopher, and the liberal-minded Christian; but, unfortunately, Mr. Robinson's character has been stabbed by two opposite parties, who, although they can agree in nothing else, one might be almost led to imagine had formed a coalition on this occasion; and when I reflect how some others have been treated, their reputation attacked, and their weak sides most unnecessarily exposed, by a *friend*, I am ready to adopt the exclamation—"Heaven defend me from my *friends*, and I'll defend myself from my *enemies*!"

My regret has been increased, when reflecting that the work on

a part of which I have deemed it my incumbent duty to animadvert, is *THE LIFE OF THEOPHILUS LINDSEY*. No testimony of mine, I am conscious, can add to the high reputation of such a man; but will you, Sir and your readers pardon what I fear will be termed vanity, but which is, indeed an effusion of gratitude due to his memory. When I reflect on the manner in which he first offered me his acquaintance and friendship, the eagerness he uniformly displayed in supporting my feeble efforts in the cause of civil and religious liberty, the confidential intercourses, sometimes on topics on which we differed, which intercourses, considering the vast inferiority on one side afforded such an instance of deep humility on the other, setting off and finishing (if I may so express myself) all his other Christian graces;—the benevolence I frequently witnessed, unconfined to sect or party; the numerous letters expressive of his esteem; the friendship, warm and sincere with which he and his ex-

cellent partner honoured me, and the late dearest possessor of my heart:—reflecting on these circumstances, my regret is increased when I find the “Memoirs” of such a man, containing matter extraneous and offensive, which may prevent a circulation so extensive and effects so beneficial as might otherwise have been naturally expected. Would the learned biographer abridge a work, which contains much treasure, he would, indeed, render a most essential service to the Christian world.—But I must stop my pen. May my soul rest with the soul of Theophilus Lindsey, in that world where I hope to be re-united with those I have esteemed and loved:—in that world where thorny controversy will never be permitted to enter, and “painful farewells and adieus shall be for ever unknown!”

Your constant reader,

B. FLOWER.

Erratum in the last Number.—In the letter of Archdeacon Blackburne, p. 23, line 11, after the word “exceed,” add—the charity of.

REVIEW.

Still pleas'd to praise, yet not afraid to blame.—POPE.

ART. 1. *The Excellency of the Liturgy, in Four Discourses, preached before the University of Cambridge, in November, 1811. To which is prefixed an Answer to Dr. Marsh's Inquiry, respecting “the neglecting to give the Prayer-Book with the Bible.” By the Rev. Charles Simeon, M. A. Fellow of King's College Cambridge.* 8vo. pp. 172. 6s. Cambridge, Deighton;

London, Cadell and Davies. 1812.

Dr. Marsh has set a bad example in crowding his printed pages on the subject of the Bible Society with so many capitals: he, however, knows when to appear big, and when to content himself in an ordinary size; but his numerous opponents have not all aspired with equal judgment to the greatness conferred by the printer; some

of them, and amongst them Mr. Simeon, quite confound the reader with their numerous and striking appeals to his eye. This is perhaps *typical* of the Bible-controversy: as the black letters towering from their ranks divert attention from the author to the printer, so bishops and archbishops, prime-ministers and princes, and the Church of England, are made to figure away in publications pro and con, in order to draw off notice from the real subject in dispute, which is nothing less than the Protestant and Protestant Dissenting principle of the sufficiency of scripture and right of private judgment.

Mr. Simeon contradicts, rather than confutes Dr. Marsh: he quotes largely from himself, and expatiates upon his own sentiments, and his own conduct, and his own reputation, which may, for aught we know, be of weight in the discussion, as far as it is local to Cambridge, but which we must venture to say, appear to us, remote as we are from that learned place, and unconnected with the great men who agitate it by their controversies, of very little moment. It would, for instance, be of no consequence on our pages, that Mr. Simeon himself was once a member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, that he withdrew his name, that he wished to renew his subscription, but found it doubtful whether he should be re-admitted, that he recommended his brother to become a member, and that if Dr. Marsh will propose him, he will himself be again a candidate for admission. (pp. 51, 52.)

On the Liturgy of his church, Mr. Simeon is profuse in praises,

the justness of which we cannot wholly deny. His extracts are passages which have been always admired; which were admired in the Mass-Book before they were translated into Protestantism and English: a Roman Catholic might produce them as *excellencies* in his own *Liturgy*, but this would be no proof that his worship was scriptural, or his church Christian.

Mr. Simeon is sparing in his notice of objections to the Liturgy; but he vindicates, though feebly, the expressions in the forms of baptism and burial, which have been stumbling-blocks to Dissenters. He also considers the damnatory clauses in the Athanasian Creed, and, upon the whole, defends them. But the writer that has the courage to do this ought to be heard for himself.

“As I have been speaking strongly of the moderation and candour of the liturgy, I will here bring forward the only exception to it that I am aware of; and that is found in the Athanasian Creed. The damnatory clauses contained in that creed, do certainly breathe a very different spirit from that which pervades every other part of our Liturgy. As to the doctrine of the Creed, it is perfectly sound, and such as ought to be universally received. But it is matter of regret that any should be led to pronounce a sentence of damnation against their fellow-creatures, in any case where God himself has not clearly and certainly pronounced it. Yet, whilst I say this, permit me to add, that I think this Creed does not express, nor ever was intended to express, so much as is generally supposed. The part principally objected to, is, that whole statement, which is contained between the first assertion of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the other articles of our faith, and the objection is, that the damnatory clauses which would be justifiable if confined to the general assertion respecting the doctrine of the Trinity, become unjustifiable, when extended to the whole of that which is annexed to it. But if we suppose that this intermediate part was in-

tended as an *explanation* of the doctrine in question, we still, I think, ought not to be understood as affirming respecting that explanation, all that we affirm respecting the doctrine itself. If any one will read the Athanasian Creed with attention, he will find three damnatory clauses; one at the beginning, which is confined to the general doctrine of the Trinity; another at the close of what, for argument sake, we call the explanation of that doctrine; and another at the end, relating to the other articles of the Creed, such as the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ, and his coming at the last day to judge the world. Now, whoever will compare the three clauses, will find a marked difference between them: those which relate to the general doctrine of the Trinity, and to the other articles of the Creed, are strong, asserting positively that the points must be believed, and that too on pain of everlasting damnation: but that which is annexed to the *explanation* of the doctrine, asserts only, that a man who is in earnest about his salvation ought to think thus of the Trinity. The words in the original are, 'Qui vult ergo salvus esse, ita de Trinitate sentiat:' and this shews in what sense we are to understand the more ambiguous language of our translation: "He therefore that will be saved (i. e. is willing or desirous to be saved,) must thus think (let him thus think) of the Trinity." Thus it appears that the things contained in the beginning and end of the creed are spoken of as matters of *faith*; but this which is inserted in the midst, as a matter of *opinion* only: in reference to the first and last parts, the certainty of damnation is asserted; but in reference to the intermediate part nothing is asserted, except that such are the views which we ought to entertain of the point in question. Now I would ask, was this difference the effect of chance? or rather, was it not actually intended, in order to guard against the very objection that is here adduced?

"This then is the answer which we give on the supposition that the part, which appears so objectionable, is to be considered as an *explanation* of the doctrine in question. But what if it was never intended as an *explanation*? What if it contains only a *proof* of that doctrine, and an appeal to our reason that that doctrine is true? Yet, if we examine the creed, we shall find this to be the real fact. Let us, in a few words, point out the steps of the argument.

"The Creed says, 'The Catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity: neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance:' and then it proceeds, 'For there is one person of the father,' and so on; and then, after *proving* the distinct personality of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and their unity in the Godhead, it adds, "SO THAT in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped. HE THEREFORE that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity." Here are all the distinct parts of an argument. The position affirmed—the proofs adduced—the deduction made—and the conclusion drawn in reference to the importance of receiving and acknowledging that doctrine.

"From hence then I infer, that the damnatory clauses should be understood only in reference to the doctrine affirmed and not be extended to the parts which are adduced only in confirmation of it: and, if we believe that the doctrine of the Trinity is a fundamental article of the Christian faith, we may, without any breach of charity, apply to that doctrine what our Lord spake of the gospel at large, 'He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.'

"Thus, in either view, the use of the Creed may be vindicated: for if we consider the obnoxious part as an *explanation*, the terms requiring it to be received are intentionally softened; and if we consider it as a *proof*, it is to the doctrine proved, and not to the proof annexed, that the damnatory clauses are fairly applicable.

"Still, after all, I confess, that if the same candour and moderation that are observable in all other parts of the Liturgy, had been preserved here, it would have been better. For though I do verily believe, that those who deny the doctrine of the Trinity are in a fatal error, and will find themselves so at the day of judgment, I would rather deplore the curse that awaits them, than denounce it; and rather weep over them in my secret chamber, than utter anathemas against them in the house of God." (pp. 72—77.)

This commentary is worthy of the text; it is nearly as unintelligible, and only not quite so un-

charitable as the Athanasian Creed. But we are pleased that even Mr. Simeon, though he must use, and thinks it expedient to defend, this piece of absurdity and anti-christianism, allows himself to wish that it were altered for the better: when such thorough-going churchmen, as his writings shew him to be, scruple to swallow, or receive with uneasiness, this spurious formulary, we may hope that the time is not far distant when no Christian people will be compelled by Act of Parliament to take into their mouths so nauseous and deleterious a compound.

ART. II. *The duty of Britons to promote, by safe, gradual and efficacious Means, the progress of Christianity and Civilization in India. A Sermon preached at the Meeting-House, Carter Lane, on Sunday the 4th of April, 1813. By Joseph Barrett.* 8vo. pp. 21. J. Johnson, and Co.

The agitation of the question of the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company has excited a very laudable anxiety in the religious public to provide for the legal security of Christian missionaries and teachers, in our Indian territories. To mere politicians, the object may appear doubtful or impracticable; but Christians can scarcely hesitate for a moment, in making up their minds as to the importance, the right or the duty of propagating the gospel amongst heathens. Mr. Barrett has very temperately, but ably, stated what we, and what we trust the mass of our Christian countrymen, think and feel on the subject, and has satisfactorily refuted the common objections to

the efforts to Christianize the East. We cordially recommend his discourse to such of our readers as take, (and we trust there is not one who does not take) an interest in this momentous question.

ART. III. *A New Directory for Nonconformist Churches, containing free Remarks on their Mode of Public Worship, and a Plan for the Improvement of it, addressed to Dissenting Ministers, &c.* 8vo. pp. 170. Johnson, 1812.

This work, which is a thin octavo volume, unquestionably merits the attention of those persons to whom it is expressly addressed, as well as to their hearers and others concerned. It is, we are told, entitled "*A new Directory*, with reference to that which was set forth by the venerable Assembly of Divines, A. D. 1645." Of this latter we have an account in the third volume of Dr. Toulmin's edition of Neal's History of the Puritans; and a copy of it makes the eighth article in the Appendix to that work. It is not an absolute form of devotion, but, as its title imports, it contains some general directions, taken partly from the scriptures, and partly from rules of Christian prudence; it points out the heads of public prayer, of preaching, and other parts of the pastoral function, leaving the minister a discretionary latitude to fill up the outline, according to his own inclination. It comprehends the peculiarities of the old Presbyterian form of worship. It takes for granted, that all things will be done in order, and for the edification of the persons assembled for divine worship:—that extemporary prayer is the

only proper mode of address to the Deity; and that this mode would be conducted with propriety.

The *New* directory, if not the work of an ASSEMBLY, properly so called, is, at least, the result of the wisdom and experience of three persons, who seem well acquainted with the public services of non-conformist divines, who have frequently attended the ministrations of popular preachers, and who have been occasionally shocked, as every serious person must be, at the familiar and indecent addresses sometimes offered to the omnipotent God, under the form of prayers. We have, accordingly, after some introductory observations on public worship; and a chapter on the advantages and disadvantages of an invariable use of extemporary prayer, an account of the improprieties in the prayers of certain individuals, and on public occasions. To facts very similar to those detailed in the new Directory we have ourselves been frequently the witnesses, and we apprehend that they occur almost perpetually among preachers who have little to recommend themselves but a boisterous assurance, and an apparent familiarity with the Creator of the Universe, which no humble worshipper of his Maker can, or ought to assume.

To those, therefore, who constantly use extemporary prayer, and to others who attend upon ministers that never deviate from the custom, we earnestly recommend an attention to the work before us. It is no caricature of the practice complained of: it is no exaggeration of facts as they really exist: the picture would have borne a much higher colouring, and would

still have been only a fair and candid representation.

We come next to the remedies proposed, which cannot be well understood but by those who are accustomed to Dissenting modes of worship, and who are occasionally wearied with what are called, and properly called, *long* prayers. As if the Almighty were to be appeased, or to be rendered beneficent by many words, the prayers of some divines will run out to 40 or 50 minutes, although every sentiment uttered might be expressed in eight or ten; but either the minister thus addressing his Maker wishes to establish his credit for being more gifted than his brethren: or he is not aware that his prayers thus unnecessarily protracted are mere tautologies, which he would be ashamed to use were he addressing himself to a fellow-creature, in, perhaps, a higher station of life than that in which he himself moves. To remedy this evil the authors of the *New Directory* recommend what is called the *long* prayer to be divided into two.

This was the advice of Mr. Orton, but we believe it did not answer: we remember that it was adopted a few years since by a very respectable minister in London, and was continued by him till he quitted the metropolis for a distant county. We observed one inconvenience attaching to it: ministers who occasionally officiated for him, not knowing, or at least not adopting his method, were put to confusion by the congregation not exactly knowing when they were to rise to offer up their prayers, and when to remain sitting while, perhaps, the scriptures were read. It is true that inconveni-

ences of this sort must occur by every innovation upon the usual practice, and therefore they ought not to bar the road to rational attempts to improvement. If, however, ministers would confine themselves within proper bounds, there would be no great necessity for this change; those who make use of extemporary prayers, instead of written ones, or praying memoriter, seldom have such a command of ideas, or rather of words, for we do not give them credit for an exuberance of ideas, as to avoid tautologous phrases, which are the causes of the evil complained of. Hence say the authors of the New Directory, if extemporary prayers are comprehensive there is danger of their becoming prolix and tedious. To do justice to all the several parts of prayer, in a methodical, pertinent and concise manner, in the extemporary mode, is no easy matter; as a relief therefore to those who feel these difficulties, they recommend the adopting of **SUPPLEMENTARY FORMS**, taken entirely from the Scriptures; which are admirably adapted for the purposes of devotion: as they contain nothing liable to doubtful disputation, and as the language of the sacred writings is peculiarly adapted to public worship, beyond any thing merely human, whether immediately conceived by the person who leads the service, or whether previously composed with ever so much care.—But some object to *written* forms, and recommend young ministers to make themselves acquainted with the devotional parts of scripture, and commit to memory such passages as are best adapted to public worship: to this it is replied that

the attempt to recollect particular passages of scripture may prove a great impediment to devotion, occasion embarrassment to the minister, and have an unhappy influence on the congregation.

“Now such inconveniences as these,” say the authors of the New Directory, “which attend a mere reliance on the memory, in the recital of scripture passages in prayer, will be effectually prevented, and every desirable use of them secured, by having a fair copy of them before the eye of the minister, which he may read as he has occasion, or otherwise pronounce as he may find liberty; for we do not recommend it to ministers slavishly to confine themselves to the reading either prayers or sermons, but rather to use freedom of delivery in both. And what rational objection can be made against their availing themselves of such a help to the memory in the one case more than in the other, which is allowed in most of our societies? Or what possible disadvantage can arise from reading a prayer from the Bible, or from a written copy, more than repeating it by rote, which in fact is reading it from the tablet of the memory; for that (as a great divine* expresses it) “is an invisible book,” which is read by the eye of the mind, as the other is by the bodily eye. The latter is, in fact, the most favourable to the real devotion of the speaker; and to the people both are equal: for a prayer delivered from the memory is as really a Form as one that is read from a book; and indeed to the people, even an extemporary prayer is as much a Form to them as either; since they are as much confined to the sentiments and the words of the minister in the one case as in the other.”

The next chapter of the work before us, is a statement of objections, to the plan recommended,

* Bishop Wilkins on Prayer.

with suitable replies : then comes chapter VI. containing "A plan of Worship for Dissenting Congregations," which we shall briefly lay before our readers.

Let the public service on the Lord's-day, begin with reading a few short passages of scripture, such as relate to the resurrection of Christ :—the privileges of Christianity :—the nature, pleasure and benefit of divine worship. The New Directory likewise adds passages on the *institution of the Sabbath* : but as no such passages occur in the New Testament, and as Christians assemble as adherents to the religion of their master, Christ, and not to the Mosaic system, we demur to this part of the advice, and still more to the recommendation of praising God in Christian worship for the appointment of the Sabbath, *as a memorial of the creation*, because this carries us to the reason assigned in the 20th chapter of Exodus for the institution of the Sabbath, which (we speak it with due reverence) seems not more absurd than it is childish. The true reason for the institution of the Sabbath appears to us to be recorded in the fifth chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, which says, after repeating the commandment appointing the seventh day as a day for the observance of religious duties, "that thy man servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well thou : for remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched arm, therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." Here there is no reference to the cessations of labour of the Creator,

but motives of benevolence are assigned in making it a day of rest to inferiors ; and reason for gratitude in the higher walks of life, which were to be excited by the recollection of a deliverance from past calamities.

But to proceed to the Directory : after reading some suitable passages of scripture, to solemnize the heart and prepare it for the duties in which it is about to engage, and to excite in the worshipper emotions of gratitude, a short extemporary prayer is recommended ; then the singing of a general hymn or psalm ; after which a lesson from the Old Testament is to be read, accompanied with short explanatory and practical observations, and this is to be followed by a general prayer, taken chiefly from the book of Psalms. Next is to follow a second lesson from the New Testament, accompanied also with observations and remarks : then a short extemporary prayer, to which is to be added the intercessory prayer, consisting partly of scripture passages and partly of such free petitions as there may be found occasion to introduce, with reference to particular cases. Another hymn is now to be sung : then the sermon ; after this, there is likewise to be singing, and a short extemporary prayer is to conclude the service.

Such is the plan of worship recommended in the New Directory, to which we feel some objections, and to others different objections will no doubt occur. The authors have anticipated many that they imagined might be produced and have answered, and, perhaps, in some cases, obviated them. Our limits do not allow us to pursue the subject much farther : we wish

the authors would complete their plan by compiling, for the public, scriptural forms of worship: and we earnestly recommend to our readers the seventh and eighth chapters of the New Directory on this subject and on that of Doxologies. It certainly behoves serious and candid ministers to consider well the propriety of their own conduct, if, (as too many of them do) they discard all the scripture doxologies, and substitute in their room those of human invention, decidedly contrary to any thing to be found in the Old and New Testament: and it is observable, that this custom or practice is not to be met with among Unitarians, who do not in general believe in the plenary inspiration of every thing contained in the scriptures, but among others who, while they maintain this doctrine, yet substitute absurd and idolatrous doxologies for those made use of by the apostles. To such we may say, in the words of the authors before us,

“If scripture be a safe and sufficient rule of faith, of practice, and of worship, whoever they be that object to the scripture forms of doxology or benediction, *they* may, with more appearance of justice, be suspected of unsound principles, than those who prefer these to any human modes of expression, however sanctioned by great names of antiquity, on the one hand, or modern reasoning on the other.”

Our readers will, by the above account, see the drift and object of the work under consideration: it is written with simplicity and Christian candour: it merits the attention of Christians in general, and particularly of Dissenters:

much may be said in defence of liturgies, much in behalf of written, and even extemporary prayers, when used with sound judgment and superior talents, the object of the New Directory is to press the use of these in conjunction, making the written part to consist chiefly or wholly of scriptural expressions, against which, as far as the *matter* is concerned, none can object.

Upon carefully examining the plan, which we have thus detailed, we think that what the authors praise, as giving *variety* to their method, would be more praiseworthy if there were fewer parts in their mode of worship: we admire the introduction of the service by a solemn and grateful enunciation of certain passages of scripture; we think equally well of the reading of the scriptures with short comments and practical observations, which may be introduced after a brief introductory prayer, but surely what is called the long prayer need not be divided, and need not (as we know we shall not be heard for much speaking) be lengthened beyond ten or twelve minutes, so that the whole service, with a sermon, concluding prayer, and twice, or at most thrice, singing, would not necessarily require more than an hour or an hour and a quarter, which would leave room for a familiar lecture on important subjects, to those who will devote a few additional minutes in attending it. After all, with the writers of the New Directory, we leave our readers impartially to judge for themselves, recommending, on far higher authority, that “All things be done decently and to edification.”

When the *Second Part* of the

Directory is published, we hope to hear that the experiment has been made upon the plan recommended in the first part, and we shall be happy to give an early record of its success.

SOCIUS.

ART. IV. *An humble Vindication of Unitarianism, being a Second Edition of a Letter addressed to the Unitarian Society, Rolovenden, Kent.* By S. Dobell. price 3d.

ART. V. *The Morning Visit; or a Dialogue between an Apprentice, his Father and his Master.* By S. Dobell. price 6d. Eaton.

The first of these pamphlets is a judicious and serious address to unlearned Unitarians; well adapted to impress their minds with a sense of the importance of their principles, and of the necessity of cultivating such a spirit and temper as may be the means of recommending them to others.

The "Morning Visit," is an entertaining dialogue on the grounds of Unitarian dissent from the establishment. It is intended to remove the prejudices of serious churchmen, against those, who in conformity to the dictates of their consciences, worship God the Father only, and attend at those meetings where no other person or being is worshipped. We understand that it was suggested by a circumstance which took place in, or near the neighbourhood.

ART. VI. *The Titles and Attributes of God no Proof of the Divinity of Him to whom they*

are ascribed; a Sermon, preached before the Southern Unitarian Society. By William Hughes. 12mo. pp. 36. Isle of Wight printed; sold by Johnson and Co. and Eaton, London.

This is an ingenious attempt to revive the hypothesis of *Benjamin Ben Mordecai** that the visible Jehovah of the Old Testament, the actual Creator of the world, the 'Angel of the Covenant,' was Jesus Christ in his pre-existent state. We question whether the hypothesis will be thought sufficiently plausible to excite a new discussion of it. Mr. Lindsey has ably, and, we think, successfully, controverted it in the *Sequel to the Apology* (pp. 295—386). Could Jesus Christ be proved to be the Creator of mankind, we see not how his right to divine worship, could be disproved. Ben Mordecai consistently, though against all evidence, contended for his having been the object of the tabernacle and temple worship.

While, however, we object to the drift of this discourse, we are pleased with both its ingenuity and candour; and there are passages in it (see, particularly, the *note*, pp. 14—17) which contain as strong and well stated arguments for Unitarianism as we are acquainted with.

* See "The Apology of Benjamin Ben Mordecai to his friends, for embracing Christianity; in seven letters to Elisha Levi, Merchant of Amsterdam. Together with an Eighth Letter on the Generation of Jesus Christ, with Notes and Illustrations, 2nd edition. By Henry Taylor, A. M. Rector of Crawley, and Vicar of Portsmouth, in Hants." In 2 vols. 8vo. 1784.

INTELLIGENCE.

Unitarian Society.

The anniversary of the London Unitarian Book Society was held on Thursday, the 8th inst. Ebenezer Johnston, Esq. in the Chair. The success of this Society in suggesting and supporting other similar societies, becomes every year more apparent, and forms an increasing proof of the value of the parent institution. It was announced to the Annual Meeting that the sale of the large impressions of the several copies of the Improved Version, is such as to justify the hope of a new edition, for which measures are taking.

Unitarian Fund.

The Annual Meeting of this Society will be holden as usual, on the Wednesday in Whitsun week, June 9th: the Sermon to be preached by the Rev. E. Butcher, of Sidmouth. Further particulars in our next.

Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty.

The Anniversary Meeting of this Institution which has essentially promoted the cause of toleration, and which will, we hope, make future and effectual efforts for the attainment of that complete Religious Liberty which we advocate, will occur on Saturday, May 15, at the New London Tavern, Cheap-side, at 11 o'clock precisely, when we presume that a numerous assembly will be collected to receive the Report of the interesting proceedings of the Committee, during the past year; and we are requested to remind our readers that the small annual contributions from the congregations connected with that Society, are become due, and should be immediately remitted to enable them to meet the great expenses they unavoidably incur.

Religious Liberty in India.

At a general Meeting of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the Three Denominations, residing in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, holden at the Library in Red-cross Street, on Tuesday, April 20, 1813.

The Rev. William Newman in the Chair.

RESOLVED,

1. That any public measure, connected with the rights of conscience, the unrestricted liberty of worship, and the extension of the Christian religion, is a proper object of attention to this body.

2. That the vast extent of territory and power, which the British nation has acquired in the East Indies, bears an important relation to all those great principles.

3. That it appears, by satisfactory evidence, that the natives of this country, resident in India, are, in many stations, unprovided with the means of Christian worship and instruction; that, in other situations, where the defect is not total, the modes of worship, which this body prefers, are exercised only by permission; and that such permission is a matter of connivance, and is held on an arbitrary and precarious tenure.

4. That it is equally established by evidence, that the greater part of the native population of the territory, now under his majesty's dominion, consists of heathens, enslaved by immoral and cruel superstitions, which are degrading to the individual and social character of man, and destructive to human happiness, to a degree scarcely paralleled in the history of mankind.

5. That, in the conscientious persuasion of this body, the Christian religion, in its pure profession and practice, would be an effectual remedy for those moral disorders.

6. That it is the duty of all Christians to employ all proper means of proposing the claims and evidences of Christianity to their fellow-men universally; disavowing the employment of coercion, artifice, or any other means of persuasion, except those of fair argument and blameless lives.

7. That the members of this body recognise as brethren, those laborious and learned ministers of different denominations, who have gone to India with the benevolent purpose, of gratuitously instructing those who are willing to learn the principles of Christian knowledge.

8. That the members of this body do respectfully and firmly assert for themselves, for their brethren, and for their children, who may enter into the Christian ministry, a natural and unalienable right to preach, teach, and worship, in whatever place, opportunity may be afforded, so long as they conduct themselves as upright and peaceable members of civil society.

9. That the power possessed by the Honourable East India Company, of prohibiting the residence of Christian teachers in the Indian territory, is unjust on the great principles of religious liberty; and that the exercise of such power must, in every case, be a violation, deeply to be lamented, of the high command of heaven.

10. That as measures for the future government of India are now under the consideration of the legislature, petitions be presented from this body to both houses of parliament, praying for the

enactment of such laws, as shall protect Christian ministers and missionaries, of all denominations, in the exercise of their functions, so long as they approve themselves to be loyal subjects of the British crown.

The Spring Quarterly Meeting of Presbyterian Ministers in Manchester and its vicinity, was held on last Good Friday, at the Rev. Mr. J. Bealey's chapel, at Cockeymoor. Mr. Allard, of Bury, introduced the service, and Mr. Dean, of Stand, preached from Acts x. 1, 2. The chapel was well attended, and the audience was serious and attentive. A dinner, suitable to the occasion, was provided at a very large and commodious school-room, belonging to, and near the chapel, capable of accommodating from five to six hundred scholars. About forty gentlemen sat down to dinner; and after spending together a very agreeable afternoon, separated between five and six o'clock.

The Meeting learnt with satisfaction that a new Unitarian congregation at Oldham is forming.

Manchester,
April, 19, 1813.

W. J.

NO POPERY.

Proceedings at Exeter.

(In a Letter to the Editor.)

Concluded from p. 220.

This was read in George's Meeting by both the ministers; and we stated the circumstances which had led us to propose it. The members of our congregation very generally came forward on the occasion, in a manner which shewed that they duly appreciate the rights of conscience. Of the other congregations some few nobly resisted the popular clamour, and added their names to our petitions; but the general voice was decidedly against us. Lord Rolle stated that the Dissenters' anti-Catholic petition had 500 signatures; I had heard above 300; but we have reason to believe that *all* the signatures were not good ones. If all the names were struck

out, of Dissenters not belonging to Exeter, of those who were Dissenters only for the time being, and of those who gave double or treble signatures, in all probability the majority would have been less considerable.

In the interval between the services, we endeavoured to make our petition known to the other congregations of Dissenters, (but I believe one minister was omitted, through a defect in our arrangement.)—I mention the fact, to add, that it gave us an opportunity of witnessing, with great satisfaction, among a few of the Wesleyan Methodists, the vindications of zealous attachment to religious liberty, which I hope will eventually leaven the whole lump. The greater part of them, however, seem to have been effectually alarmed by the tracts of the Protestant

Union, &c out of that spirit which Lord Sidmouth's futile efforts had roused in their body.

On Monday night our petition had about 180 signatures, all I believe good ones; and we then forwarded it, (as we had before done the general counter petition, to James Esdaile, Esq. who kindly undertook to deliver them to Lord Holland and Mr. Whitbread, from whom they met with a very flattering reception—A copy was the same night sent to Honiton, where I understand it was signed by every Dissenter in the place. The Dissenting anti-Catholic Petition was presented by the city members, and by Lord Rolle, whose hostility to the Dissenters has, I have heard, been strongly marked on various occasions.

Here we hoped the anti-Catholic proceedings would terminate; but some zealous excited a number of the neighbouring farmers to set forward a County Meeting; and at their requisition the Sheriff appointed one to be held on Friday, March the 19th.—Various efforts were made to enlighten the public mind, which, though apparently without much immediate effect, must eventually be of service. By the laudable exertions of a few individuals, (which met with a cheerful countenance from other friends of the cause,) a pamphlet was printed, containing the greater part of Butler's Letter to the English Protestants, and such facts respecting the state of the Irish Catholics, and the opinions of our leading statesmen, as seemed likely to change or neutralize the popular feelings on the subject; and about 1000 copies were distributed as extensively as circumstances permitted. A gentleman of the Calvinistic persuasion, (whose zealous, firm, and enlightened attachment to the rights of conscience has afforded us peculiar satisfaction,) received a considerable number of tracts from the Rev Mark Wilks; and another parcel came afterwards to myself from the same quarter. These too we distributed as beneficially as we could; and if they do no more, they will I trust assist in preparing the minds of the misguided anti-Catholic party, for a quiet acquiescence in the measures which the late proceedings of the Commons authorize us to hope will now be carried.

Our hopes as to the result of the County Meeting had been somewhat raised by the expectation that some of

the leading landholders would give their personal assistance in counteracting the misrepresentations so plentifully employed by the most prominent opponents of the Catholic claims. we found, however, that they meant merely to send a letter to the sheriff, protesting against the measure of petitioning the House of Lords in the present state of the business in the Commons. After the question had been decided, this letter was read, signed I think by the Dukes of Bedford and Somerset, Earl Fortescue, (the Lord Lieutenant of the County) and Lords Boringdon, Ashburton, and Ebrington.—The particulars of the meeting will I suppose appear in the newspapers: I will only observe as to its decision, that in the Court there appeared to be a majority in favour of the amendment, (which was moved by Mr. A. C. Tucker, of Ashburton, after a very animated and impressive speech,)—that after the adjournment to the Castle Yard, in order to accommodate the persons without, the majority, though I think in favour of the original petition, was not by any means a striking one,—and that it was not till the Sheriff directed a separation of the Freeholders, that the majority was declared by the Sheriff to be two to one. This separation of Freeholders was the less justifiable, because the Requisitionists, styling themselves Freeholders, requested a meeting of the *landholders*, because the Sheriff simply called a *County Meeting*, because the Petition proposed purported to be the petition of "the Gentlemen, Clergy, Yeomanry, Freeholders, and Landholders," and because I understand—they are admitting the signatures of those who are not Freeholders.

I should not have adverted to the County Meeting if it had not been to notice, that it has called forth the decided and zealous expression of sentiments in favour of unrestrained religious liberty to all, from some Calvinistic Ministers. The Rev. Mr. Vowles of Tiverton, in a speech which does him honour, (and for which I hope you will find room at the close of this letter,) ably supported the amendment: and in the evening several Calvinistic Ministers met, and drew up a petition for the removal of all restraints on the rights of conscience, to be signed by the Protestant Dissenting Ministers of Devon. In this measure they had the cheerful concurrence of their less orthodox brethren;

but the merit of originating it, and of carrying it into execution rests wholly with themselves.

The Reverend gentleman who is reported to have been the chief private promoter, as well as public supporter of the anti-Catholic proceedings, has not hesitated to stimulate the popular feelings against those Dissenters who have come forwards to oppose them; according to him, they spoke "one word for the Roman Catholics and two for themselves." If I may judge from the speeches of that gentleman, I should suppose him incapable of comprehending how any person could zealously espouse the Catholic cause, upon the broad basis of right and justice, and from a disinterested concern to remove pressures which are so severely felt by those whose faith they consider as decidedly erroneous. By such motives I trust we have been influenced. For myself I can say with confidence, that if the rights of the Dissenters could in no way be promoted by the Catholic emancipation,—if they would certainly be impeded by it,—I should have felt the same earnest desire for the attainment of it, and have pursued precisely the same track in which that desire has already led me. I wish to see the remaining encroachments on the Dissenters' rights removed, because I regard them as a

disgrace to my country, as unjust to the Dissenters, and as a snare which has led too many to the forfeiture of their principles: but farther than this, I do not think their removal worth an effort: I do not believe that it would contribute to the worth or respectability of the Dissenting body to be in the possession of those places of honour or profit, from which the Corporation and Test Laws now exclude them.—The insinuation was equally unjust and ungenerous; but I hope it chiefly affects our minds, as furnishing another motive to the ignorant yeomanry of the County to oppose the Catholic claims.

On the day when intolerance gained a new triumph in this place, we had the satisfaction of learning, that the House of Commons had proceeded with additional success in its career of justice and enlightened policy: and I trust it will not be very long before they will offer to the Lords some well digested plan of mutual conciliation and security, which may remove the alarm now excited by the phantoms of bigotry, and convince even the bench of bishops, that they may accede to the claims of the Catholics, without endangering the honours and emoluments of the established Church.

L.C.

OBITUARY.

Rev. John Atchison.

On Tuesday, Feb. the 9th, died at Leicester, the REV JOHN ATCHISON, a man whose talents, attainments and virtues, would have given him no mean distinction in the eye of the world, had not an unparalleled modesty and diffidence concealed them as much as possible from observation. But retired and unassuming worth, should not quit this scene of discipline, without receiving the tribute of applause, nor intellectual and moral excellence go unrecorded, because it shrunk with delicate sensibility from public notice, or because its possessor was unconscious of his treasure. In the present case, however, the writer who has undertaken to give a brief account of a departed friend, will so far be guided by what were once his feelings, as rather to withhold from him the praise which is his due, than to embalm his memory with a studied eulogium. He was born in March 1743, at Everdon in Northamptonshire,

and was for sometime at Northampton, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Gilbert, where he was remarked as a youth of a studious and reflecting turn of mind. From Northampton he went to Daventry, in order to go through a course of studies preparatory to the office of dissenting minister. He continued there the usual term, under the care of Dr. Ashworth. Of his academical life the writer of this memoir possesses no particulars, but the uniform respectability of his character, furnishes the strongest presumption that he was among the most amiable and diligent of the students of his day, and that he then exhibited the fair promise not only of his future talents, but of the virtues by which he was distinguished. After the expiration of his academical course, he settled at Gorton in Lancashire, where he resided 20 years, highly respected and beloved by the congregation in which he officiated. There he married Miss Tayler, daughter of — Tayler,

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Esq. of Rochdale, by whom he had two daughters, one of whom survives him. It will naturally be supposed, that the extraordinary diffidence which was spoken of above, must have made it peculiarly unpleasant to Mr. Atchison to make that public exhibition of himself, which was required by the duties of his office as a Christian minister, and hence it will not excite surprise to learn that at length, when he could not conquer this infirmity, he resigned the care of the congregation at Gorton, and for a time preached occasionally, when his benevolence led him to sacrifice his own feelings to the convenience of a friend. Upon giving up his occupation as a stated minister, he removed to Leicester, in order to enjoy the society of some of his relations who resided in that town. Here he devoted himself to the pursuits of literature, in which he took a wide and varied range. Few men perhaps read more, or with more minuteness of observation, and solidity of judgment. At length the pleasing task of educating his two daughters, occupied a considerable share of his time and attention. How well he was qualified for such a task, the success which followed his affectionate labours most unequivocally proved. He stored his beloved pupils with a rich variety of information, such as the enlightened spirit of the present day, acknowledges to be the appropriate ornament of a female mind. But here an event must be stated, which the writer cannot record without a trembling hand. Nearly two years ago, his eldest daughter, Lucy, who, combined with every feminine virtue, a manly strength of mind, and a habit of reflection, not often found in either sex, fell a victim to a consumption in her one and twentieth year. It need not be said how he felt this lamentable bereavement; but he bore it, as those who knew him predicted he would, with the calm and dignified fortitude of a philosopher and a Christian. His constitution, however, probably received a shock from which it never recovered, and perhaps his grief might prey the more upon his frame, as it did not vent itself in impassioned expressions. In the course of last summer, his sources of enjoyment were again materially diminished by the death of his sister, the late Mrs. Reid, of Leicester, to whom he was with reason most tenderly attached, and from whose society he had long derived a considerable share of his satisfaction.

After this latter shock, the infirmities of age began to appear in him, and at length, after an illness from which he had seemed to be recovering, he expired suddenly in a fainting fit, without a struggle, quitting the world as quietly as he had passed through it.

His singular modesty, and habits equally retired, rendered it difficult to those who did not know him intimately to lay hold of the prominent features of his character. His diffidence indeed was the quality which was most obvious; which none could fail to observe, and which all his acquaintance lamented as a loss to themselves. But the few who were familiar with him knew him to have been a man of sound learning, of correct judgment, and of a highly cultivated taste. They regarded him also as a man of sincere but rational piety, and whose conduct through life was in the highest degree exemplary and consistent.

His compositions for the pulpit were esteemed singularly neat and judicious. His manner would not have suited a society which preferred *sound* to *sense*, or even the graces of elocution to a discourse replete with solid and useful matter. In religious sentiments, he was not inclined to either extreme, but his connection was with the most liberal Dissenters, none of whom surpassed him in liberality. Indeed he was more solicitous about his *practice* than his *faith*, and endeavoured to be, what they who knew him best believe him to have been, a Christian in heart and life.

Mr. John Coventry.

[In a Letter to the Editor.]

Mitcham, Surry, Jan. 8, 1813.

SIR,

I have had several instances of observing how very sanguine some, even pious men, are, in catching at every opportunity of exposing what they are pleased to call "dangerous errors;" and I fear this is sometimes done, even at the expence of truth itself. The following case will, I think, justify my assertion.

A worthy Christian friend of mine, Mr. John Coventry, many years a resident in the parish of Saint Saviour's, Southwark, a man universally respected by all who knew him, and whom I have known for nearly fifty years, was visited in his last illness by his son-in-law the Rev. Mr. Mann, who is chaplain of the said parish. My friend depart-

ed this life the fourth day of December last, and on the 27th a funeral sermon was delivered by Mr. M. on the occasion, at the parish church.

The preacher took the occasion of shewing the causes which frequently operate on the minds of persons in dying circumstances, to produce that distress which sometimes is seen; and with respect to my deceased friend, expressed himself in nearly the following words, as given to me by a person present. "I am satisfied that the principal cause of the distress of mind which disturbed the deceased, was owing to his having imbibed *wrong opinions*. In earlier life he had embraced the Winchesterian system of universal restoration; upon which subject I have had many serious conversations with him, which I know on his death-bed he sincerely deplored and deeply lamented. The deceased informed me that about seven years ago he began to see his error, and that he had sent for an old and much-respected friend, to state to him the change of his mind, and likewise to warn him of the like error." Now, Sir, from the report of all the family who attended my dying friend, it appears that I am the old friend alluded to, and of which there cannot be the least doubt, since we have been intimately acquainted for many years. It is true the deceased did twice send for me, and we had some religious conversation together; yet he never once intimated to me the least change in his mind respecting his view of the restoration of all mankind; nor did he warn me of the "*dangerous error*," as Mr. M. is pleased to call it.

Within the period which Mr. M. alludes to, he has married the daughter of the deceased; it is therefore not a matter of surprise, that the deceased has of late attended the ministry of his son-in-law; but from many conversations which I have had with him, I have every reason to believe that he never did change his sentiment in this particular; but that, on the contrary, he has for these thirty years fully believed in the doctrine, and rejoiced in the glorious view of the same. Upon what account, therefore, Mr. M. is pleased to call all those who believe in this doctrine "*mere quibblers*," I cannot conceive; since, I believe, there are few men, who in their general character, have displayed the marks of a

Christian during a long life more than my valuable friend has done.

Mr. Coventry, in his early days, was a pious man, and much attached to what Mr. M. would call the *evangelical* plan of salvation; but after he received this "*unscriptural view*" of the final state of all mankind, he steadily believed that "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

As my deceased friend has throughout his life been an uniform character, remarkable for his patient temper and benevolent disposition, and was well known as a Christian man by several denominations of professors, I have thought it my duty to represent this valuable man and his sentiments in their proper light; and I can also assert that the uneasiness of mind, under which he was pressed when I first visited him, arose from circumstances very different from what Mr. Mann has been pleased to represent them.

I am, Sir,

Your's very respectfully,
WILLIAM BICKNELL.

Mrs. Thomas.

Died at Sandling, near Maidstone, Kent, on Tuesday, the 4th of August, 1812, MRS. THOMAS, aged 72. She was a dissenter from principle, and a regular attendant at the Unitarian Meeting-house, Maidstone. She was pious without moroseness, charitable without ostentation, and liberal to all persons, of whatever religious denomination. In her seemed united all the graces of the Christian. By her death the poor have been deprived of a kind benefactress, the young of an enlightened adviser, and her family of a most affectionate mother. The writer of this brief sketch is conscious that he is unable to do justice to the many virtues of so excellent a woman; he will only add that she will long be remembered by all who enjoyed the pleasure and happiness of her friendship.

G. H.

Mr. Caleb Evans.

Died March 17, 1813, in his 71st year, MR. CALEB EVANS, of Pontypool, Monmouthshire. He was a very active and useful member of the community, when at length the infirmities of old age (that incurable dis-

case) stole upon him, and terminated in his dissolution. He possessed a good understanding, a cheerful disposition, and a benevolent heart. To the last he retained his faculties, and expired with the humble expectation of admission into a better world. His hope was founded on the declarations of mercy made in the gospel of Jesus Christ, who hath brought life and immortality to light. In his last illness, which he bore with exemplary fortitude and resignation, he often repeated these lines :

Leave dull mortality behind,
And fly beyond the grave.

Beloved and respected, it is not a matter of surprise, that a more than usually large concourse of people should follow his remains to the tomb. They were happy in paying the last token of respect to his memory. His *hier* was borne from his own door for about an hundred yards, by three sons and his youngest son-in-law, according to an ancient and affecting custom of the Principality. Having thought much on religious subjects, his views were rational, aiming to shun the extremes of enthusiasm and superstition, whilst he felt a strong aversion to every species of uncharitableness and bigotry. Most honourable were his ideas of the Supreme Being. To do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, was, in his opinion, the sum and substance of Christianity. He and the late Dr. Caleb Evans, of Bristol, were brothers' children. His eldest son, agreeably to the desire of the deceased, improved the event of his death at Worship Street, from Job xiv. 1, 2. MAN, that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down, he fleeth also as a shadow, and

continueth not. His selection of this passage did not arise from his having had a more than ordinary portion of anxiety attaching to his lot, but his mind bending beneath the pressure of years, was strack with the evanescent nature and constant vicissitudes of mortality. He was a GOOD FATHER. Indeed, few persons were more interested in the welfare and prosperity of their offspring.

Some feelings are to mortals
given,
With less of earth in them than
heaven ;
And if there be an human tear,
From passion's dross refined and
clear,
A tear so limpid and so meek,
It would not stain an angel's
cheek,
Tis that which aged parents shed
Upon their dutious children's
head.

Throughout life he was the lover of peace, as well as the friend of CIVIL and RELIGIOUS liberty.

Filial affection, with a trembling hand, consecrates this very summary account to a beloved parent's memory.

Islington, April 26, 1813.

Rev. Samuel Girle.

April 19th, at his house in Bethnal Green, the REV. SAMUEL GIRLE, aged 56. His departure was sudden. He had gone down to Reading to preach to the Unitarian congregation there, on account of the Unitarian Fund; but owing to a violent pulmonary affection, was unable to officiate more than one Sunday. He returned home only the evening before the day of his death.

MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS;

OR,

The Christian's Survey of the Political World.

The Catholic question has occasioned no small stir in the religious world, and to this has succeeded one of considerable importance to the East Indies. Here is a wide field for contemplation, and with it no small occasion for grief at the state of Christianity in these extensive regions. The English name is revered through the whole peninsula of Hindostan. The natives have received our yoke, comparatively light in respect to that which their Mahometan conquerors pressed upon them: but if our dominion and our commerce have been greatly enlarged, we cannot boast of hav-

ing made any progress in rescuing the country from the horrid superstition under which it labours. It may be said, that we ought not to interfere with the religion of a country, and that the rights of conscience ought to be respected. In this we most cordially agree: but, if a heathen nation could, in a treaty, make one of its articles to be the abolition of human sacrifices, surely, in the time that we have had possession of India, some of its inhuman rites might have been abolished without injury to just toleration.

The question is now taken up in a very serious manner, and important consequences may be expected from the discussion. To understand it rightly, we must consider what is the state of religion, and what steps are taken to promote its progress in the East. The great mass of the population consists of idolaters, in the grossest sense of the word. In one part is a body of native Christians, which has been established there for many centuries, under the forms of the Syrian Church. Of the European settlers, the old ones are Catholics, and they have not only magnificent churches, but also the horrid court of the Inquisition. The Danes have a few Protestant churches. The English have scarcely any congregations, and religion may be said to have been for many years neglected by them. This state of the country, however, could not be long endured, and a spirit arose, chiefly excited by the Baptists at home, who sent out missionaries into those benighted regions, and by their efforts the gospels have been translated into all the languages of Hindostan. An alarm, however, seems to have been excited, lest the

preaching of Christianity should be attended with dangerous consequences, and that such an innovation as the conversion of the heathen might tend to shake the stability of our possessions in India.

Unquestionably we cannot expect that a government should be influenced by the same zeal which animates the breast of a missionary: and if it finds that the nations may be easily governed by leaving them alone under their ancient prejudices, it may be apprehensive of the consequences from their being disturbed. But surely this apprehension of danger ought not to militate with the sacred duty of every christian people, to promote as much as possible the kingdom of the Redeemer. There may be danger from the operations of excessive or misguided zeal, but this will not excuse complete apathy, much less any opposition to well-directed endeavours to correct the errors of the ignorant, and to communicate to them the treasures of the gospel. If we are benefited by them in temporal things, surely we are inexcusable if we do not invite them to be partakers with us, in what are spiritual.

The present application for a new charter by the East India Company brings the question home to every man's bosom, and it is with great satisfaction we have seen so many petitions presented to parliament by various bodies of men for religious freedom in India, and for some security that the persons, who are promoting the cause of Christianity, should, to say the least, not be discountenanced by the ruling powers. Several high characters, very conversant with the manners and customs of the East, have been exam-

ined by the House of Commons: but after a few days it was agreed that the subject of religion should be reserved. Their opinions however, tended in general to countenance the idea of such complete prejudice on the part of the natives, that little good could be expected from any attempt to convert them, and that any interference with respect to religious opinions might be attended with dangerous consequences.

The question must, however, undergo a very serious discussion. Lord Castlereagh, by his resolutions, of which the last relates to the appointment of a Bishop and Archdeacon of the established church, shews that something must be done on this head, and the advocates for religious truth have now to be on their guard, not only, that in the new charter religion shall have some place, but also that in the modification of the plan due care be taken, lest the favour shewn to the established sect should paralise or destroy the efforts of those sects, which hitherto have shewn the most zeal in the cause. In what manner to draw the line between the sect established by law, and the sects not established by law, and in what manner to preserve the jurisdiction of the company, and at the same time to give sufficient scope to the energies of the missionary, great prudence may be requisite; but we shall hope, that in this respect the councils of the nation will be directed rather by the greatness of the object than the timidity of those persons, whose attention was directed whilst in India more to civil than to religious concerns, and who could not have been expected to enter into the discussion of the superiority of the Testament

over the Shastres and Vidas of their superstitious subjects.

We were in hopes to have laid before our readers the arrangements intended with respect to the catholics. The heads of a bill for this purpose were to have been brought into the house before the holidays, but in so great a question delay is very excusable, and in the able hands, to which it is committed, we cannot doubt that they will profit by delay, to make the whole as acceptable to all parties as possible. Every account from Ireland manifests that the people are contented with the progress already made, and in full hopes that justice will be done to them. We trust that they will not be disappointed; and that in fact all parties will see the propriety, every day more and more, of separating religion from politics, and allowing the sovereign to benefit equally by the talents of all persuasions.

A bill of importance also to religion has been brought into parliament by Sir W. Scott, the gentleman whose trial we noticed in our last, and on whom the verdict of the jury cannot but have produced some good effect in the proposed measure. He, it will be remembered, excommunicated a person for refusing to be guardian to an unworthy son, and was sentenced to damages and costs of suit for this power assumed in his courts. He has now brought in a bill, relative to ecclesiastical courts, of which the principal objects are, 1st. to abolish excommunication, except in one or two instances. 2ndly. To regulate the courts of inferior jurisdiction, and 3rdly. to facilitate the recovery of tithes and rates. We have not seen the bill, but we

cannot disguise our fears, lest the subject should be put into a worse situation than before. 1st. As to the sentence of excommunication, we trust, that this will be confined only to members of that established sect; for in the one or two instances in which it is retained, it may become, when sanctioned by act of parliament, a grievous cause of harrassment to Dissenters. 2. With respect to courts of inferior jurisdictions, the regulation of them will sanction, by act of parliament, whatever power is given to them, and when once that power is allowed, it is not easy to say, to what lengths it may be carried, and with what difficulty hereafter it may be shaken off. 3. The facilitating of the recovery of tithes and rates involves the rights of the greater part of the kingdom, and no small degree of care is necessary, lest any thing should slip in, which, considering the expensiveness of ecclesiastical courts and their mode of trying, may hereafter bear very hard upon the subject. We trust, that the Deputies of the Dissenters will keep a watchful eye over this bill during its progress through the two houses; and in fact, not only Dissenters, but Churchmen, are so interested in some point or other of these regulations, that it will require no small diligence and study, on all sides, to preserve themselves from injury.

Another important step in the progress of religious freedom has been taken in Spain, where the Cortez has shewn, that it is really in earnest in abolishing the wicked ecclesiastical courts that have so long been a disgrace to that country. The clergy, it seems, were refractory on this head, and made excuses for not reading in their churches, as was ordered, the edict for the abolition of the Inquisition. They have been called to an account for this conduct, and in such a manner as to shew these gentry, that the supreme authority is not to be trifled with. Inquiries have been made into their conduct, and they have consented, though with reluctance, to perform that duty, which they ought to have undertaken with the greatest pleasure. The priests of faction indeed may endeavour to set up the pretended authority of the church against the civil power; but in doing this they are to be taught, that their pretence of acting as ministers of Jesus is an insult to his name and to his religion. He does not give countenance to any ecclesiastical court whatever, which acts by pains or penalties. Wherever such courts exist,

they must date their authority from the acts of the civil power. and they are not entitled to call themselves servants of the Redeemer, whose religion is love, but are ministers of the government of the country. Fire and faggot, stripes and imprisonment, are not recognised in the kingdom of our Saviour.

To these important movements, with respect to religion, must be added, the late impulse towards the Jewish nation, to convert which, a society has been formed in town and it hath attained sufficient strength to erect a chapel, and and other buildings, for the purposes of the institution, at Bethnal Green. The foundation stone was laid by the Duke of Kent, and the ceremony was attended by a very numerous company. We cannot too much applaud the design, but our knowledge of the Jews forbids us to entertain any sanguine expectation from these efforts. The Jewish nation seems to us, to be kept apart from the rest of mankind for some great purpose, which, in its own good time, Providence will display to us, and when the veil is torn away from their hearts, and they are brought to the knowledge of the Saviour, they will have from their dispersion great opportunities of promoting his kingdom. At this moment there is an insuperable bar to their examining of the truths of Christianity, nor will it be removed, till Christians have returned to the knowledge of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ceasing to worship him under a name, invented by scholastic divines and philosophers, and convincing the Jews that their God is the same God, who selected Abraham their Father from an idolatrous world.

The impression made on the public mind, by the charges brought against the Princess of Wales, and the discovery of their complete futility and baseness, has, as was expected, been manifested in the acts of great public bodies towards injured innocence. The city of London has addressed her royal highness upon this occasion, and the example has been followed by the votes and addresses from the city of Westminster, the borough of Southwark, the county of Monmouth, and several other places. They are expected to be very general, for the very extraordinary situation, in which so high a character has been placed, cannot but affect very materially the interests of the country.

The state of the continent is at this moment most critical. The Russians and Prussians are in the heart of Ger.

many. Hamburgh, Dresden and Leipzig are in their possession, but the French have still Dantzick and other strong fortresses in their rear. The two combined powers have issued proclamations exciting the Germans to stand forward in defence of their liberty, and they have declared their determination to destroy the confederation of the Rhine, and to restrain France within its ancient bounds. The Germans have then to choose between the French and the combined powers. Of the former they have had experience, the influence to be acquired by the Russians in the affairs of Europe is a novelty, whose effects cannot easily be calculated. They promise liberty, whose government was never supposed to have very clear ideas of that word, and the new kings of Germany, whose titles and acquisitions depend upon the arrangements made by the confederations, must naturally entertain some fear for the change, which is to be made in the constitution of the country. The accounts, however, brought to us indicate, that the Germans tired of the French yoke, are eager to shake it off, and to trust to their new benefactors for amelioration in the state of their harassed country.

On the other hand, Buonaparte has been indefatigable. He has lost no time in recruiting his army, and his country has not betrayed, as might have been expected, any wish in his fallen state to remove him from the government. Time will shew, and that speedily, to what extent they have assisted him, and how far his new raised levies will maintain the glory of the French armies. His fortune seems to rest on the cast of this die, and the vigour of his mind has not by any means forsaken him. To the labours of the last campaign, and the fatigues of the escape from his army, succeeded incessant toil in the cabinet, and he has now quitted Paris to take the command of his armies on the banks of the Rhine. Changed indeed is his situation, from that, when after receiving the homage of the dependent kings, he reviewed his army of veterans on the banks of the Niemen, and led them forward impatient for the combat. The memory of the past, cannot but have made an impression on his present army. He is no longer the invincible hero. The charm is broken, and if in his first attempts he should meet with defeat, the dependent kings having no longer any confidence in him, will join with the two confederated powers

to drive him beyond the Rhine. Austria at present is in suspense. Denmark seems to have taken a more decided part. Sweden has landed troops in Pomerania. The great warrior is like a lion hemmed in nearly on all sides. He rushes boldly forward against his opponents; dreadful will be the conflict, and its termination awful. When will men cease to be thus the subjects of mad passion, and to destroy instead of supporting their fellow-creatures? When will they reflect on the high destination to which they are called, and, not being dazzled by the transitory splendour of what they falsely call heroism, act as becometh those who know that they must appear at the bar of Christ, where, without respect to his rank on earth, each man must render an account of his deeds, and where the vanity of human applause will be of no avail.

The distress of Buonaparte does not seem to have weakened his armies in Spain, to the degree that might have been expected. He is said to have withdrawn some troops, but probably it is merely officers that he has taken, whose places have been supplied from the garrisons of France. No movement of consequence has been made by our army, but the campaign will probably soon commence, and the English will advance into Spain, where, if any thing should happen in the north to Buonaparte, their triumphs will be of more permanent utility to the independence of the peninsula. Still, however, there does not seem to be that activity in the Spaniards, which might ensure success, and the war may be carried on for years with alternate success, unless Buonaparte is compelled to withdraw his troops, or increase their number.

The United States do not give up their designs against Canada, nor does there appear to be any movement towards reconciliation. They continue to take prizes, and with their petty fleet dare to wage the unequal war. Our vessels have, however, taken such stations at the mouths of their harbours, as will prevent the warfare from being so advantageous to them as it has hitherto been, and both sides have seen enough to know, that the contest may be carried on, but to their mutual injury. Spanish America is in its usual dubious state, but if any thing, the insurgents seem to have the advantage in the province of Mexico.